Ruins to Re-use:
Romano-British Remains in Post-Conquest Literary and Material Culture

Volume One of Two

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Abstract

This thesis examines the re-use of Roman material culture in England following the Norman Conquest at St Albans, Chester, and Colchester. It argues that the material legacy of Roman Britain conveyed a sense of imperial authority, antiquity and longevity, and an association with the early Christian church, which were appropriated to serve transitional Norman royal, elite, monastic and parochial interests in different architectural forms. Importantly, this thesis examines literary evidence describing the Roman past, Roman buildings, and even instances of re-use, which were produced at each town as part of the intellectual expansion of the twelfth century.

This thesis comprises of two introductory chapters, followed by three central case study chapters, and culminates in a comparative discussion chapter which evaluates re-use in the context of competing socio-political interests following the Norman Conquest. It expands upon previous understandings of re-use by focusing on topography, building material and hidden reuse, in addition to the re-use of portable remains and decorative emulation.

The aim of this thesis is to develop an interdisciplinary methodological and theoretical approach to examine re-use, in the knowledge that this yields a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. In addition to literary and archaeological evidence, it draws theoretical perspectives from history, art history, and literary criticism.

The underlying tenet of this thesis challenges the view that re-use was often unremarkable. Through an examination of multi-disciplinary evidence, it becomes clear that re-use was a complex, nuanced and, above all, meaningful part of the architectural endeavours of the Normans, and was used to secure their primacy at these towns and across their emerging nation.

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Acknowledgements

Declaration

I declare that this thesis, and the research upon which it is based, is my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and duly acknowledged in the text and bibliography.

This work has not been already accepted in substance for any degree, nor is it being concurrently submitted in candidature at any other university, or for any other degree.

Signed:

Dated: 30th June 2013

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis examines the re-use of Roman material culture following the Norman Conquest of England up until the mid-thirteenth century, through a series of interdisciplinary, comparative case studies of St Albans, Chester and Colchester. This thesis demonstrates that the physical legacy of Roman-Britain had a fundamental place in the architectural and literary culture of England in the long twelfth-century, and its re-use informed the creation of a collective Norman history. Narratives of the Roman past became part of the Conquest process, and Norman identity was shaped by Romano-British remains in an often highly localised context. Roman re-use also demonstrates a form of continuity with local historical events, pre-Conquest forms of government and administration, as well as continental trends, which drove re-use in literature and the material record. This thesis will demonstrate that the re-use of Roman material culture was a persistent, if variable, cultural phenomenon in Norman England.

In the context of this thesis, re-use comprises of the re-positioning, translation or appropriation of Roman building material, sites, decorative techniques and portable artefacts in the material record. This can be seen in variety of secular, monastic and parochial institutions in each urban environment. There is also a significant literary tradition at each site, which runs in parallel to the physical re-use of Roman material culture. Literary evidence can be found in charters, saints' lives, Roman and Norman historical accounts, foundation myths and praise poetry. Literature which discusses re-use consists not only of accounts of buildings and objects, but also features narratives of the demolition and salvage processes and accounts of Romano-British history, which make particular reference to physical or geographical traditions. There is also evidence for the existence of oral traditions which recalled Roman historical narratives. Re-use in all forms will be examined at each town.

This thesis explores the prominence of re-used Roman material culture in the twelfth century, and how it was used both to memorialise Roman Britain as well as to promote Anglo-Norman cultural ideals, religious and secular power, governmental authority and the Anglo-Norman historical legacy. This thesis questions the process by which Norman people arrived at their awareness of the Roman past; how this Roman past was actually used, both physically and in literature in the Norman period; and how an understanding of the past was translated using material culture as an act of cultural appropriation or negotiation. Rome and *romanitas* –the political and social ideals, customs and principles which encompassed the Roman way of life and its legacy — were important cultural commodities in twelfth-century England. However, these had various meanings depending on the political and personal requirements of their users. Re-use also operated for a variety of audiences, and its meaning could be altered by differing cultural sign-posting.

This thesis informs the disciplines of archaeology, literature, art history and history-allowing for a greater understanding of re-use processes in the archaeological record; twelfth-century Latin literature; spoliation and decorative appropriation; and historical figures of the twelfth-century. The assembly of as much data as possible about an author or builder's chronological, geographical, social and cultural locations is a key to unlock historical context of re-use.[1] This process of contextualisation allows literary and architectural works to be seen as statements in turn of their authors' attitudes about the proper ordering of society.[2] Texts and buildings were cultural products, designed and executed with a purpose and an audience to receive their message. *Romanitas* operated as authors and builders attempted to reconcile the local histories of their own towns with a wider twelfth-century interest in the classical past. This was a mutual process of authorisation: Roman material culture at each site was not only re-used because it was antiquated and affiliated with the classical past, but the authors and builders also used the age of the site to demonstrate their own antiquarianism and classical knowledge.

From an archaeological perspective, this thesis informs any understanding of post-Conquest archaeology by analysing the re-use of Roman remains in material endeavours of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Recent studies have questioned the extent of social upheaval precipitated by the Conquest, but it is undeniable that the Normans had an innovative and lasting impact upon the landscape of Norman England.[3] All over the country, castles were built to cater for the new elite, and monasteries were founded widely, reflecting the strength of the continental Benedictine reform movement. Norman buildings were planned and executed on a hitherto unprecedented monumental scale, leading some scholars to suggest that castle and cathedral building was a tool of Norman imperial policy.[4] Following this, parish churches were also established or rebuilt as part of the new ecclesiastical restructuring of Norman England. At the case study sites, all of which had previous existences as Roman settlements, the new Conquest building projects featured the extensive re-use of Roman remains, and conformed to topographical and decorative norms laid out by their Roman forebears. This thesis allows archaeologists to examine the nuanced and complex material expressions of re-use in architecture and the built landscape of Norman England.

This thesis also addresses serious lacunae in the literary understanding of material remains, and after reading this thesis, literary scholars will be appreciative of the pervasiveness of

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[1] Matthew Innes, *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.

[2] Innes. *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, 4.

[3] Eric Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27, 32.

[4] John Gillingham, *The English in the twelfth-century: imperialism, national identity, and political values,* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2000).

materiality in twelfth-century literary production. The veneration of objects of ancient value forms the basic understanding of the literary ideas of *romanitas,* deriving from an affinity with the culture, history and literature of ancient Rome. However, not only do texts reveal information about buildings and social developments of the twelfth-century, they also help determine Norman attitudes to the Roman past. This thesis will demonstrate that people in the Middle Ages understood Roman artefacts very well and could place them in their social or historical context when writing about them.[5] Medieval texts also accurately described Roman history, remains, and even re-use processes in the twelfth-century. The texts discussed in this thesis contain many passages concerning the built environment and the Romano-British past, and all are grounded in the physical landscape of twelfth-century Britain, which has not been adequately explored in secondary studies of twelfth-century literature.

This thesis also addresses processes of re-use, or spoliation, from an art historical perspective, and challenges the opinion of many existing art historical and archaeological studies that material re-use was ubiquitous and often unremarkable.[6] Instead, this thesis proposes that the political and historical context of the long-twelfth-century created the specific conditions whereby, in the case-study towns, the re-use of Roman material remains was both conscious and highly meaningful. Objects of antiquity and the authority they carried were revered throughout the Middle Ages, not only for their survival against the odds, but for their association with the past civilisation of the Romans.[7] Chapter Two outlines a new, detailed model for understanding re-use, which is informed by, and in turn informs, art historical perspectives. This thesis proposes that re-use is almost always significant as an act of appropriation that recognises material remains have been sourced from elsewhere. This thesis is inherently concerned with processes of spoliation, which is historically the domain of art historians, but this thesis also adds to the art historical corpus by examining aspects of re-use such as cruder decorative emulation and hidden re-use. Art historians, like all disciplines informed by this thesis, should understand that artistic and decorative materiality is not confined to their area of expertise, and that spoliation is a process which crosses all disciplines.

Historians reading this thesis will gain greater insight into building programs of the Norman Conquest, and will also understand how re-use and classical emulation in architecture

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[5] In his description of the re-use of Roman stonework from Caerleon, in the construction of Chepstow castle. Tim Eaton. *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire, Tempus Publishing, 2000).

[6] Dale Kinney, 'Introduction' in Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine, ed. Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate 2011), 2.

[7] Antonia Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England', *Speculum*, Volume 47, No. 1, (1972): 31.

and literature affected historical processes of the twelfth century. This thesis will reinforce the idea that the re-use of Roman material culture in England was part of an elite understanding of the past, perpetuated by the upper echelons of the Anglo-Norman secular and ecclesiastical classes. It will also assert that within this elite framework *romanitas* and its material form of re-use were used to justify many competing claims to authority and power. While the re-use of Roman culture refers to notions of empire and imperial ambitions, the emulation of late-Roman Christian practices often inspired instances of re-use. The Roman church was also as much a relic of the Roman world as the Roman Empire, and this was frequently capitalised upon by Norman ecclesiastical interests. Thus, following the Conquest, re-use was used to negotiate social and political dominance by emergent Anglo-Norman leadership at a local community level, and is an indicator of wider cultural principles which were disseminated internationally during the twelfth century.[8] This thesis crosses disciplinary boundaries to offer new historical perspectives on Norman studies, monasticism, Romanesque style and medieval urban and civic life.

Roman re-use following the Norman Conquest reveals that Anglo-Saxon socio-cultural traditions concerning Rome persistently filtered into this period. Pre-Conquest architectural developments and literary traditions also shed light on the changing facets of re-use in the twelfth-century. The influence of Anglo-Saxon culture and local historiography on the Norman identity became part of their means of assimilation into England and the assertion of Norman authority in their newly acquired kingdom. This relationship often operated at a local level, as expressions of *Normanitas,* or Norman identity, became concerned with existing and localised re-use. This concern can be seen in larger Norman secular buildings and monastic institutions, which was later adopted by parochial or geographically distant locations. The Anglo-Saxon past was important to twelfth-century writers and builders and this in turn shared a complex relationship with the re-use of Roman material culture.

This thesis examines *romanitas* and how it relates to the construction of *Normanitas*, as Norman literature attempted to lay claim to, and supersede the historical legacy of pre-Conquest Britain. The re-use of Roman remains was heavily bound up with the remaking of Saxon churches, as an attempt to derive power from material destruction, recreation and displacement of Anglo-Saxon historical processes. Anglo-Saxon culture presented the means by which Norman builders and writers could acquire a full appreciation of the England's history; and both Anglo-Saxon and Roman building materials were used in conjoined expressions of the past during the twelfth century. In addition, several monasteries following the Conquest became concerned with re-

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[8] See Mary Carruthers, 'The Poet as Master Builder: Composition and Locational Memory in the Middle Ages', *New Literary History,* Volume 24 (1993): 881-904; and Patrick J. Geary. 'Land, Language and Memory in Europe, 700-1100', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Volume 9 (1999): 169-84, for an explanation of nationalist and cross-cultural dissemination of intellectual culture.

founding monasteries described by Bede in attempts to promote the "Christian" aspects of the established English past. This appropriation of the past in monumental monastic architecture is another way that the Normans expressed the monopolisation of previous histories, and the power-broking of new Anglo-Norman characteristics.

While Saxon churches were rebuilt by the Normans, other attempts to create an Anglicised identity did not rely on other methods of re-use first purported by the Saxons. For example, the Saxon practice of re-using Stone Age barrows was not carried into the Norman period.[9] Thus, there were a range of competing Norman attempts to override existing historical practice on a selective basis, seemingly tied to ideals of empire and Conquest, and best suited to an emulation of Romano-British culture. The fluid territory of Norman and British nationality demonstrates competing motives for the re-use of physical remains, and the literature of the period allows us to understand the wider intellectual environment of the twelfth-century as well as medieval attitudes to the past, memory and the creation of historical narratives.

The twelfth century saw the burgeoning of secular administration and universities across Europe, which resulted in rapid developments in intellectual life, art and architecture. The creation and writing of history led to an increased retrospection and preoccupation with the past, as well as a renewed interest in Greek and Roman writers and a flowering of Latin language and style.[10] It was this admiration for classical civilisation which led to an interest in archaeological remains in Britain, and many writers practised 'realistic observation' in their descriptions of the physical world around them.[11] The emergence of a more varied literary tradition during the 'Twelfth-Century Renaissance' saw a greater sophistication and frequency in discussions of these buildings and material remains. There was considerable evidence of a conscious antiquarianism in the twelfth century, and this thesis contributes further material and physical perspectives to this understanding of the Roman past.[12] It was these twelfth-century literary traditions, combined with the slightly earlier post-Conquest architectural developments, which led to the widespread creation of a culture which revered the Roman material past.

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[9] Howard Williams, 'Ancient Landscapes and the Dead: The Reuse of Prehistoric and Roman Monuments as Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites', *Medieval Archaeology*, 41 (1997): 1–31.

[10] The term 'Twelfth-Century Renaissance' was first used in twelfth-century studies in 1927 with the publication by Charles Homer Haskins of 'The Renaissance of the Twelfth-century'. Since then, the existence and nature of a Twelfth-Century Renaissance has been the subject of intense scholarly discussion. For a detailed analysis, see R.N. Swanson, 'Debates and Contexts' *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1999), 1-11, 40; Constable, 'A Living Past: The Historical Environment of the Middle Ages', 171.

[11] This idea forms a large part of the literary approach to re-use in the case studies. See Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England': 29-51.

[12] Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 55.

Roman re-use was tied to the development of monumental Romanesque buildings in England, and can be partially explained by an Anglo-Norman desire to be *en vogue* with continental cultural influences. The castles and monasteries of the late-eleventh and twelfth-centuries were considerably larger than anything seen in England prior to the Conquest. Even the parish churches dwarfed their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, though on a more modest scale. This monumentalism can be explained by a desire to emulate the larger Romanesque style of Lombardy and France, as well as the need to convey Norman power through an expression of conspicuous consumption.[13] Norman Romanesque was the most advanced building style in Normandy in the early eleventh century, and the program of church reform associated with Romanesque building was closely linked with administrative power and eventual papal support for the Norman Conquest.[14]

Access to the materials, skills and labour required to build on such a scale would have required vast resources of wealth and human capital, and the sheer size of what is known as English Romanesque may have been intended to convince Anglo-Saxon witnesses of the supremacy of their Norman overlords. This study aims to create dialogue with re-use in other geographical locations such as Normandy, Lombardy or Rome. However, by grounding this study in three British towns of Roman origin, and in the context of their religious, social and political climates following the Norman Conquest, the thesis is able to examine the circumstances of re-use in both a national and local environment. The insular focus of this study explicates the specific context and aims of re-use in England, which differ from the socio-political conditions of continental examples.

Roman re-use in Britain was a practice that was already well established by the time of the Norman Conquest. Roman remains had frequently been used in churches;[15] and there are several texts which discuss the legacy of Rome's material culture.[16] However, the twelfth century provides the first examples which survive in enough detail to allow for an archaeological and literary study

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[13] Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, 32-33.

[14] Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, 14.

[15] See Blair, *The church in Anglo-Saxon society*, Chapter 4.

[16] Gildas and Bede wrote about Roman Britain, but others also mention Roman artefacts and material remains. Pseudo-Nennius interpreted archaeological evidence at Cair Segeint (Segontium), Alcuin and Gildas both discuss Roman walls and try to rationalise their origins, and the anonymous Anglo-Saxon poem *The Ruin* discusses the Roman ruins at Bath in their state of demise, See Blair, *The church in Anglo-Saxon society*, Chapter 4; Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England': fn p 31; Pseudo-Nennius, *Historia Brittonum* III 166, in *British history and The Welsh annals compiled by Nennius* edited and translated by John Morris, (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980); For Gildas on the Roman walls (Hadrian and Antonine) see Gildas, *De Excidio Britanniae* 15-18. Alcuin mentions the Roman walls at York in *De Pontificibus et Sanctis Ecclesiae Eboracensis Carmen*, lines 19-37; A copy of *The Ruin* can be found in *The Anglo Saxon World: an anthology*, edited and translated by Kevin Crossley Holland, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 59-60.

of re-use in conjunction. Links with the Anglo-Saxon past were often expressed through re-use in monastic space, and buildings and twelfth-century authors were often keen to emphasise these links in their writing. The dualistic nature of *romanitas* – the cultural legacy of the Roman Empire and the Roman Church — promoted the transmission of the Roman past through ecclesiastical, as well as secular institutions. Some of this interest in re-using Roman remains may also have stemmed from re-use practices in Normandy, before and after the Conquest. The churches of Ouilly-le-Vicomte, Vieux-Pont-en-Auge, and Notre-Dame-Outre-l'Eau all feature extensive re-use and decorative practices, such as Roman tile banding and herringbone brick patterning seen in the churches of this thesis.[17] This suggests that contact between Normandy and England may have precipitated the spread of Roman re-use prior to, and following the Conquest.

Both Saxon re-use, and re-use practices which may have been imported from Normandy contribute to an understanding of the origins of Norman re-use in England. While this thesis concerns itself primarily with localised re-use practises which may have existed before the Conquest, it is imperative to recognise the re-use of Roman material remains was practised all over Europe. Re-use in Normandy may have created some form of 'continuity' with continental practice as the Normans arrived in England, or it may have been a significant adoption or exchange of stylistic traits in the fifty years following the Conquest. That pre-Conquest churches in Normandy share re-use practices with buildings in England may suggest that people commissioning the case study buildings may have even had stronger ties with their pre-Conquest Norman identity. This thesis attempts to understand the human motivations of those carrying out acts of re-use, in both literature and the archaeological record, through an exploration of the historical figures involved in the process of re-use. Re-use was carried out by both transitional Saxo-Norman elites and Anglo-Norman royal or urban leaders who either did not want to break totally with existing cultural institutions, or wanted to delve deeper into England and Normandy's past in order to establish a common Roman heritage. By patronising, commissioning, constructing, and writing about Norman buildings, medieval people made significant choices which reflected Norman building practices and highlights the importance of re-using Roman remains.

In each case study there is a clear patron of most building works, and there are also twelfth-century authors who were clearly associated with propagating an understanding of the Roman past or re-use in literature. However, it is not particularly easy to ascertain the extent of their involvement, beyond small references in later chronicles, and it is not known whether they relied upon others in their re-use programs. This is one of the most methodologically challenging

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[17] S.E.L. Blain, Ceramic Building Materials in Early Medieval Churches in North-West France and South-Eastern England: Application of Luminescence Dating to Building Archaeology, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Durham, 2009).

endeavours of this thesis, and relies upon the assumption that information about a person can be significantly garnered through an analysis of their creative endeavours- either buildings or texts. The nature of elite culture following the Conquest means that re-use was promulgated as a top down model of social interaction, however, the diversity in ethnic origins of Norman society meant that these men were exposed to a variety of different re-use practices, and expressed them in creative and versatile ways. Most interestingly this thesis will demonstrate an established series of personal networks across England, which disseminated ideas about Roman material remains and their re-use.

The case-study sites of this thesis all feature significant amounts of standing material from the Roman period and the twelfth century, allowing for an assessment of the physical translation of building material from one setting to another across a whole town site.[18] The three chosen towns feature a cross-section of Roman urban environments and medieval development, as major Romano-British towns evolved into repopulated urban centres with considerable elite infrastructure in the long twelfth century. This provides a representative and comprehensive sample of how the topography of each town evolved from the Roman period until the High Middle Ages. The three towns are also situated within different geographical contexts, with two towns in Essex, and one near the northern Marches on the border of Wales. This selection means that the landscape of Anglo-Norman and continental Romanesque architectural influence across England can be better understood. However, not all re-use would have been visible to medieval audiences, and some instances were more concerned with the act of re-use, rather than aspects of visual display. For this reason, the varied ways that 'hidden' or 'covered' instances of re-use occurred in different buildings will be examined.

The case-studies for this thesis feature a wider articulation of re-use than other contemporary sites, but not so much as to make them atypical of elite activities in England following the Conquest. At London, there is less extant archaeological remains from which to ascertain re-use processes due to WWII bombing, but it is known that the City of London area features large instances of re-use. These reveal significant medieval adherence to the Roman street plan; use of the Roman walls of London for defensive military purposes from the late-Saxon period; the re-use of building material and decorative stonework against the Roman city wall; and banded polychromic patterning in the Watergate of the Tower of London.[19] London also provides

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[18] Abigail Wheatley focuses primarily on castle facades in her exploration of the re-use of Roman stones, to the exclusion of other important aspects of secular buildings. Richard Morris focuses on churches in the English landscape. These both demonstrate that existing scholarship tends to focus on individual building types rather than a whole urban landscape. Abigail Wheatley. *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England*. (Woodbridge, Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 2004). Richard Morris, *Churches in the landscape*, (London: J.M. Dent, 1989).

[19] Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, 137.

one of the most compelling twelfth-century texts concerned with the classical past. William Fitzstephen's account of the city compares the architecture and civic institutions of the city with those of classical Rome:

> "According to the chroniclers, London is far older than Rome. For it was founded by the same race of Trojans, but by Brutus, prior to Rome's foundation by Romulus and   Remus. Consequently both still have in common the same laws and   institutions. The one, just like the other, is divided into wards, in place of consuls, London has sheriffs chosen annually. It has a senatorial order and lesser officials. It has a system of sewers and conduits in the streets, judicial pleas, arguments, and deliberations   each   have   assigned places, their courts. It has days fixed by custom for the holding of assemblies."[20]

Fitzstephen's text outlines a range of architectural and bureaucratic institutions, along with rhetorical devices, to make a favourable comparison with Rome, in keeping with authors who wrote on localised remains at the case-study sites of this thesis. This shows that textual emulation was not confined to St Albans, Chester and Colchester, and that praise literature was produced in other urban environments following the Norman Conquest.

At Bath, there are several instances of re-use, with a spring in the Roman temple to Sulis-Minerva rebuilt as the 'King's spring' in the twelfth century, and the Bath Abbey constructed from significantly large amounts of Roman material remains. Interestingly, Bath shows a clear pattern of patronage from John of Tours, bishop of Bath, and physician to William Rufus. While very little of John of Tours' building programme survives, it is known that that he built a leper's hospital, another hospital dedicated to St John, the Norman abbey, a priory and bishop's palace. Re-use in the abbey and the bath complex may demonstrate John's preference for Roman building material, and had these buildings survived, would have provided an excellent parallel case-study for the towns of this thesis, both in its identifiable historical patron and homogenous program of re-use.

Roman building material from Caerleon in south-eastern Wales was re-used in Chepstow Keep, as elucidated by Eaton and Wheatley, and my masters' thesis demonstrates the clear and intentional link between spoliation processes at Caerleon and textural descriptions between Roman and Arthurian traditions at the town.[21] Also in Wales, polychromic banding on particular faces of Caernarfon Castle has been cited as a deliberate attempt to convey Roman authority via

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[20] William Fitzstephen, 'Description of London', in F. M. Stenton. *Norman London : an essay, With a translation of William Fitzstephen's Description by Professor H.E. Butler and a Map of London under Henry II by Marjorie B. Honeybourne*, (London: published for the Historical Association by G. Bell and sons, 1934), 29-30.

[21] Jane-Heloise Nancarrow, "'Lofty towers and gilded gables': Re-imagining Roman-British Caerleon in the twelfth century", unpublished MA thesis, University of Western Australia, 2009.

re-use and emulation of Roman decorative patterning.[22] Carlisle abbey and castle demonstrate extensive re-use of Roman remains, and William of Malmesbury carefully described the presence of a ruined Roman hall and inscription.[23] It must be noted that towns in the north of England and Wales towns were comparatively isolated compared to the larger royal towns of the Norman Conquest, and that localised re-use may either relate to either a relative poverty or dearth of building material, or a stronger association with the Roman past.

Twelfth-century Canterbury featured a mix of imported and re-used Roman stone, with Canterbury Cathedral built out of imported Caen stone, but many other buildings in the town, including the castle, containing the instantly recognisable Roman *petit appareil* facing stones, flint and brick *tegulae* salvaged from Roman remains in Canterbury. Winchester Cathedral was built out of stone sourced from the Isle of Man, and only roughly preserves the Roman street layout (see Discussion Chapter for a detailed discussion of the preferences for Caen, or other stone types of white appearance).[24] In York, the most striking examples of re-use come from the siting of the Norman Minster over the *principia* area of the Roman headquarters. The foundation of this building also demonstrates the re-use of Roman stonework.[25] The renovation of the multangular tower at York in the later middle ages suggests an interest in remains, and Roman stone was found in parts of a twelfth-century crossing pier (inside the thirteenth century Gothic rebuild) of nearby St Mary's abbey.[26] Unlike the case-studies of this thesis, the monks and townspeople of York did not produce texts which clearly engaged with Roman remains in the twelfth century, demonstrating that monastic and civic communities were perhaps less interested in conveying their connection with the Roman material past.

Despite small-scale instances of re-use at York, Winchester and Canterbury, it is clear that most of the major building projects of the Norman period were undertaken using imported or locally sourced stone which emulated imported colour and style, and *not* re-used stone, despite having significant accessible Roman remains available in the period. This challenges ideas of Norman re-use as a homogenous process following the Conquest, therefore showing that the case

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[22] William Kynan-Wilson, '*Mira Romanorum artifitia:* William of Malmesbury and the Romano-British Remains at Carlisle', Essays in Medieval Studies, Volume 28, (2012): 35-49.

[23] Julia Barrow, 'Churches, education and literacy in towns 600-1300', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[24] Tim Tatton-Brown, 'Building Stone in Canterbury c.1070-1525.' David Parsons, *Stone Quarrying and Building in England AD 43-1525*, (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd. in association with the Royal Archaeological Institute, 1990), 71-72; John Crook, *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years*, (Winchester: Dean and Chapter, Winchester Cathedral, 1993), 37–46.

[25] Derek Phillips et al., *Excavations at York Minster, Volume 1: From Roman fortress to Norman cathedral*, (London: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, 1995), 49-50.

[26] . E.R. Tate, 'The charm of St Mary's Abbey and the architectural museum, York', (York: *Yorkshire Philosophical Society Annual Report*, 1912), 16.

studies chosen for this thesis do not entirely reflect wider re-use trends in twelfth-century building and literary production. The re-use of Roman brick in the case-study sites may also suggest a significant identification with pre-Conquest re-use traditions, as local Roman brick has also been found in churches in Normandy. Both of these differing approaches to re-use of local remains will be explored in this thesis. The relative 'completeness' of their architectural, historical and textual records demonstrates that, at these sites, the re-use of Roman material culture was perhaps more deeply ingrained, localised, patronised and promoted than at other post-Conquest English towns.

Twelfth-century writers included the Romans and their visible remains in their histories in order to participate legitimately in literary and historical production in the twelfth century. It was often admiration for classical civilisation which led to this interest in archaeological remains in Britain.[27] However, not all twelfth-century authors were so admiring of Rome. In some, it provoked the competitive spirit; England too had treasures and fine buildings.[28] Relationships of admiration and rivalry can be seen in the portrayals of the past. Rivalry with Rome can be seen in William Fitzstephen's description of London, where he states that, "London is far older than Rome", and lists how similarities between the cities are ultimately superseded by the superiority of London. Gerald of Wales also claims that the buildings at Caerleon "once rivalled the magnificence of ancient Rome".[29] Citation of 'ancient' or classical texts also seems to have been a means of deriving authority for information, and many twelfth-century authors used literary traditions of classical authors to support their arguments or evidence[30]. Techniques of adaptation, expansion and elaboration had a profound influence in texts which discuss remains of antiquity or

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[27] Eaton, *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, 40. William Kynan-Wilson's thesis also addresses traditions of engagement with Rome in twelfth-century English writing. Increased classical awareness in the twelfth-century also meant that the knowledge of Rome as a city of art treasures and monumental buildings was prolific, and many twelfth-century elite administrators had undertaken personal visits to Rome. Kynan-Wilson's thesis examines traditions of English author's engagement with Rome in the twelfth-century. William Kynan-Wilson, 'Rome and *Romanitas* in Anglo-Norman Text and Image (circa 1100-1250)', (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 2012).

[28] Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England': 30. "The one, just like the other, is divided into wards. In place of consuls, London has sheriffs chosen annually. It has a senatorial order and lesser officials. It has a system of sewers and conduits in the streets". Lines 180-185 in William Fitzstephen, 'Description of London', in F. M. Stenton. *Norman London : an essay, With a translation of William Fitzstephen's Description by Professor H.E. Butler and a Map of London under Henry II by Marjorie B. Honeybourne*, (London, Published for the Historical Association by G. Bell and sons, 1934), 29-30.

[29] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerarium. Cambriae.,* Book I, Chapter V.

[30] Indeed, according to Swanson many twelfth-century texts were "padded" with classical references and modes of speech, and twelfth-century authors never passed up an opportunity to display their knowledge of classical Latin writers, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 49.

re-use.[31] Twelfth-century texts re-appropriated Biblical and Classical tradition, real and invented history and also used significant powers of creative imagination.[32]

Monastic authors such as William of Malmesbury, Gervase of Canterbury and Symeon of Durham all show concern for historical continuity that was at least in part a reaction to the upheavals of the Norman Conquest.[33] William of Malmesbury is both critical and receptive to the Anglo-Saxon architectural legacy. Regarding the new monastic foundations, he criticises the "small, mean houses" in which the Saxons "wasted their entire substance",[34] but he also states that "it would have been better to preserve the old foundations in their former state than to rob them to build new ones while they fell into ruins".[35] The monastic histories by the monks of Westminster and St Albans attempted to derive authority from continuity with the Anglo-Saxon past. The histories served the local curiosity about the Anglo-Saxon past; orchestrated in defence against diocesan aggrandisement.[36] Continuity with pre-Conquest monastic history served monastic interests and asserted their primacy against other houses and secular institutions in the post-Conquest environment.

Descriptive writing formed a large part of the literary interest in in Roman remains, whereby writers in the twelfth century described what they saw in detail and a few drew rational deductions from their observations. [37] This was often practised in addition to descriptions of fantastic or miraculous events and the two processes can often be found in the same texts. Moments of personal observation, whereby authors were familiar with the sites described and, using powers of observation and deduction, constructed descriptions and histories of the sites

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[31] Ryding defines two primary categories of narrative amplification: rhetorical amplification, in which the writer reproduces received material but gives it fullness with greater detail of explanation, and material amplification, in which the writer introduces new narrative within or at either end of his work. William W. Ryding, *Structure in Medieval Narrative*, (The Hague, University of Michigan Press, 1971), 65-66. See also Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England': 206.

[32] When discussing Geoffrey of Monmouth's monumental history of Britain, Cohen states, "His *Historia* did not just respectfully supplement the vision of history produced by Bede and other twelfth-century historians; but created a new style which shows his active participation in the twelfth-century efflorescence of history". Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, identity and monstrosity in Medieval Britain: on difficult middles*, (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 65. See also Constable, 'Past and Present in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, perceptions of time and change', 66, 139.

[33] Giles Constable, 'Past and Present in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Perceptions of time and change' *in Culture and Spirituality in Medieval Europe*. (Aldershot; Hampshire: Ashgate, 1996), 142.

[34] *Gesta Regum,* 459.

[35] Malmesbury also tells of Bishop Wulfstan's grief at the destruction of the late-Saxon St Oswald's at Worcester: "Wulfstan stood there in the open air to watch, and could not keep back his tears". *Gesta Regum,* 506-7.

[36] Julia Crick, 'St Albans, Westminster and some twelfth-century views of the Anglo-Saxon past' *Anglo Norman Studies* Volume 25 (2003): 65.

[37] Gransden proposes that this use of observation as evidence amounts to rudimentary historical research. Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England': 30.

relating to material culture, were prevalent. Often this involved inferences about the purposes of buildings of antiquity, and identifying their original function within the Roman townscape (sometimes inaccurately). The increasing sophistication and objective interest in the environment led medieval people to question their origins and physical surroundings. [38]

The assertion that twelfth-century accounts of Rome and Roman remains were purely the result of personal observation can be challenged; in addition, these descriptions were highly literary, inter-textual and rhetorical accounts.[39] This interpretation of accounts fits with the meaningful re-use of remains in the first place, however it will become clear that a combination of all of these factors provided the impetus for the descriptions of Roman remains and re-use in each of the case studies. Regardless of the original motivations of twelfth-century authors, it is clear that they were part of a significant engagement with the Roman past, the meaningful re-use of Roman material culture in Romanesque architecture, and literary descriptions which record this process in twelfth-century writing. In order to fully understand the processes of re-use which occurred at each case study in the long twelfth century, we must first explore the many and varied disciplinary and theoretical approaches to re-use.

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[38] Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England', 42.

[39] Kynan-Wilson, 'Rome and *Romanitas* in Anglo-Norman Text and Image (circa 1100-1250)', 3.

Chapter Two: Methodology and theory of interdisciplinarity and re-use

2.1 Interdisciplinary approaches to re-use traditions

This thesis addresses the lacuna in cross- and interdisciplinary studies which examine medieval material culture in conjunction with textual sources, allowing for a cohesive perception of Roman material culture and its re-use. It challenges pervasive attitudes which are often divided along disciplinary lines, as literature, history, art history and archaeology have all adopted different frames of reference to examine the legacy of Roman culture. These divides can even be seen in the polysemous terminology used to describe re-use: literary material and critical theory use terms such as 're-mediation' and *translatio imperii* or *translatio studii*; while the material disciplines of archaeology and art history use 're-use', 'recycling' or *spolia*. In highlighting these differences, this thesis aims not to further entrench disciplinary boundaries, but rather to propose that certain historical questions can be addressed more fully and satisfactorily by bridging existing methodologies.

Evidence, methodology and theory from multiple disciplines are crucial for comprehensively understanding pervasive processes of re-use in Anglo-Norman culture. This is the case because Anglo-Norman re-use itself was not a single discipline. Apart from the multiple ways Roman remains could be used in the material record, re-use of physical material was often closely correlated and understood within the context of what twelfth-century authors were writing. An interdisciplinary approach will also inform wider ideas about the links between textual production in the twelfth century and the physical surrounding in which these writings were composed, as well as medieval understandings of re-use and how texts and the physical world were manipulated in order to create a collective memory. This thesis is fundamentally concerned with the integration of literary, historical and archaeological evidence, not only in its methodological approach, but also in an attempt to develop a theoretical perspective which unites multiple disciplines.

This thesis also addresses different phases of Norman re-use of Roman material remains, with an initial phase of material re-use in Norman buildings, with a significantly later period of textual production which engages with Roman material culture. Many of the texts in this thesis were not produced in the immediately post-Conquest period, which is when a great deal of the material re-use took place, during the first architectural construction of the early Normans. There is little mention of Roman remains in the late-eleventh century, and a lot of information about the cultural preoccupation with Roman remains comes from the Angevin period or later, as the Norman Conquest brought increasing cultural contact and exchange with the continent. Thus it is only from the second half of the twelfth century that we find explicit and detailed references to Roman remains, or discussions of re-use processes in texts. This provides the strongest

justification for using both archaeological evidence and literary sources for an investigation of this phenomenon, as the evident interest in Roman remains cannot be found in literature until at least fifty after the Conquest. The later, literary, stages of the Norman power building process during and after the Twelfth-Century Renaissance created the necessary cultural capital to engage with textual representations of Rome, the classical past, and the re-use of Roman remains, seen, but not explicitly stated in earlier architectural efforts.

One must accept that archaeology, documents and texts are inherently different forms of evidence, and there are also marked differences between twelfth century sources which are now interpreted as having either an historical or a literary remit, which often have different purposes or motives. All of these individual types of evidence were also created with different levels of intentionality and meaning. Despite these differences, this thesis will build on the idea that varying types of evidence reveal similar types of complementary information in the case-study environments, where building programs and later writing were closely linked. Historical documents, texts, architecture and landscape all function as cultural artefacts, and can tell us a great deal about their patrons, audiences and the environment in which they were created. Central to the methodology of this project is the consideration of descriptive and literary evidence in conjunction with archaeology. Alongside this approach, several disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches from art history and history will also be considered, and these are detailed below.

There is no overarching way to define re-use, though previous modelling from all three disciplines provides the language and the means to access critical ways of thinking about it. Advocates of interdisciplinarity have undertaken studies across historical, literary and archaeological boundaries, which provide a unique perspective for this project. The linguistic turn first emerged within the discipline of archaeology with the publication of historical archaeological studies such as Anders Andrén's *Between Artefacts and Texts* and John's Moreland's *Archaeology and Text*, both of which examine the relationship of archaeological evidence with other historical or literary evidence.[40] Most importantly these studies attempted to view material and literary artefacts as more than just repositories of information about the past, and engaged with the fundamental differences between disciplines. They challenged the simplistic and dichotomous statements of Josiah Ober: "A text that is nothing other than an artefact, and an artefact that is nothing other than a text has remarkably little to say."[41]

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[40] Anders Andrén, *Between artifacts and texts : historical archaeology in global perspective.* (New York; Plenum Press, 1998).

[41] Josiah Ober, "Greek Horoi: Artifactual Texts and the Contingency of Meaning," edited by D. Small *Methods in the Mediterranean: Historical and Archaeological Views of Texts and Archaeology.* ((Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 122.

The archaeologist, Martin Carver, also challenges Ober's view, asserting that the expressive and the inert, or consciousness and unconsciousness in the creation of archaeological or textual artefacts, is of greater theoretical concern than the differences between them.[42] However, he also cites Barbara Little's argument, that the differences between text and object offer great potential and can be examined on their own terms. Ultimately Carver provides a middle road, where texts and artefacts can be interpreted similarly using a creative application of source criticism, comparison and analogy.[43] Carver's analysis of different types of evidence suits this thesis particularly well, as he highlights the need to determine consciousness in the act of production of artefacts. Texts and material culture were often created for different reasons, and it is the level of meaning or conspicuousness for future consumption or display which determines the author's intentions and how they were ultimately perceived. This is obviously an incredibly nuanced process, and this thesis seeks to understand artefacts in this way, on a case-by-case basis.

Kate Giles critiques the reluctance of archaeologists to engage with textual sources, stating that the remnants of "objective" processualism marginalised the incorporation of the written word into archaeological studies. She offers a revised opinion: "it is precisely because documents were often designed to structure particular levels of power and forms of authority, that they are such resonant and eloquent sources for archaeologists."[44] In the case studies of this thesis, each type of evidence and the methodology adopted to examine it is of inherently equal value, displaying theoretical power relations in different but complementary ways. Giles' statements inform the approach of this thesis, as both text and the material record affirms the prominence of Roman material culture in the establishment of Norman supremacy.

Giles builds on the idea, first advocated by Driscoll, that "texts played an active role in the formation and manipulation of social relationships".[45] When considering re-use, it is precisely the manipulation of these social relationships which allows for the transmission of ideas about Rome and its physical remains. McClain explains that archaeologists are often complicit in their own "pigeonholing" by investigation into everyday archaeology or mundane material culture, but that they have now become relatively successful with the appropriation of documentary evidence, despite a reluctance to engage with art historical ideas of aesthetics or display.[46] This thesis will

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[42] Martin Carver, 'Marriages of True Minds: Archaeology with Texts', *Archaeology: The Widening Debate,* edited by Barry Cunliffe, Wendy Davis and Colin Renfrew, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 467.

[43] Carver, 'Marriages of True Minds: Archaeology with Texts', 473.

[44] Kate Giles, *An archaeology of social identity: Guildhalls in York c. 1350-1630*, (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000), 4.

[45] Giles, *An archaeology of social identity: Guildhalls in York c. 1350-1630*, 2.

[46] Aleksandra McClain, "Theory, Disciplinary perspectives and the Archaeology of Later Medieval England", *Medieval Archaeology,* Volume 56, (2012): 132, 157-158.

engage with documentary evidence as well as with aspects of aesthetics and display through its investigation of Roman decorative techniques and the monumentality of Romanesque architecture. Re-use intended for display was designed as an overt statement of authority and, when re-using Roman material culture, of antiquity. This thesis also argues for an understanding of elite practices of re-use for the purpose of social, as well as political statements which can be found in such acts of display.

Scholarship on twelfth-century literature currently focuses on the emulation of classical rhetorical traditions, known as *translatio studii*, over references to Roman material culture. This thesis informs an understanding of twelfth-century classical tropes by examining representations of buildings and architectural forms in a way that has been previously understudied. Very few of the texts considered in this thesis have been examined with attention to portrayal of material evidence; and the studies which do this are innovative when compared to the majority of scholarship on twelfth-century literature.[47] By examining literature in relation to material culture, this thesis reveals that twelfth-century culture was deeply concerned with the physical world. This is an inherently fruitful exercise, allowing for a more comprehensive examination of the multifaceted aspects of twelfth-century life. Abigail Wheatley, despite her singular focus on the architectural typology of castle architecture, provides a successful interdisciplinary model which carefully examines castles using literature, visual representation, and the archaeological record.[48] Wheatley's approach greatly informs this thesis, as it is one of the only studies which examine the castle in light of literature. She also explores the deliberate emulation of Roman decorative techniques to further the aims of those who were re-using Roman remains, which is one of the main tenets of the case studies.

In addressing the material aspects of Roman culture, we must also acknowledge traditions of *romanitas* and *translatio studii* inherent in 'self-consciously classicising' twelfth-century texts.[49] R.N. Swanson's study of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance highlights the existence of re-use practices in England at the time, but dedicates only a few pages to this phenomenon in his

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[47] Monika Otter's work on the landscape of St Albans, Mark Faulkner's study of Lucian De Laude Cestrie and D Stephenson's consideration of the literary evidence at Colchester, are the only studies to consider the literary evidence of this thesis in conjunction with material culture. Monika Otter, *Inventiones: Fictionality and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing*. (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Lucian-De Laude Cestrie, Mapping medieval Chester', http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk/texts/facing/Lucian.html?page=0, accessed 25th November 2009, Mark Faulkner; D. Stephenson 'An analysis of the chronicle accounts of the foundation and early history of St John's Abbey' in Phillip Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester*, (London: Colchester Archaeological Trust,, 1981), 28-30.

[48] Wheatley. *The idea of the castle in medieval England*.

[49] *Translatio studii* refers to the translation of knowledge or information from the Classical Age. Often this comes in the form of classical rhetoric which is emulated by twelfth-century authors.

appraisal of twelfth-century arts, vernacular culture and literature.[50] Similarly, Antonia Gransden discusses 'realistic observation' in relation to literature produced in the twelfth century; but she does not link this compelling concept to existing material culture particularly strongly.[51] While Gransden relates instances of descriptive writing in churches, she also focusses on historical figures and portable antiquities such as relics and crosses. Mary Carruthers discusses the building metaphor in the creation of Biblical exegesis and memorial mnemonics, which engages with the idea that texts are a built landscape which is constructed by the author/builder in order to convey specific meaning.[52] Indeed, it is the amalgamation of this evidence which leads to a more multifaceted understanding of what builders and authors were trying to say in the cultural environments of this thesis, where writing and building took place in close proximity.

The renewed interest in physicality of the built and material landscape in the twelfth century had a profound impact on intellectual and literary developments of the post-Conquest period. The majority of this literary material was produced in a monastic setting, which requires an examination of monastic interactions with elite culture, and where these supported or challenge each other's authority. The relationship between secular elites and monastic institutions was generally mutually beneficial, as monasteries relied on patronage, and secular authorities required the spiritual and economic benefits of monasteries. Each of these groups used the past to lend credibility and compulsion to their authority, and monasteries were generally complicit in the aims of the secular (and particularly royal) elite in their literary compositions during the twelfth century. Intellectual and literary culture was also widely patronised by secular interests, and monastic texts were often dedicated to elite patrons. Similarly, monastic and secular buildings often shared builders and patrons from the religious and temporal spheres. This blurs the distinction between competing interests in the twelfth-century political landscape, and demonstrates the need for a considered evaluation of the influence of each, in relation to both texts and architecture.

Both Tim Eaton and Lori Ann Gardner have utilised interdisciplinary approaches to the re-use of Roman material culture, but each author has tended to weight their argument in preference for either textual or archaeological evidence.[53] Traditionally, the remit of archaeologists studying

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[50] Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 158-159.

[51] Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England': 29-51. Gransden's ideas will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

[52] Carruthers tells us that the plans of medieval buildings were used as meditational devices and that Isidore of Seville provides the terms *architecti* and *constructio* for both buildings and texts. Carruthers. 'The Poet as Master Builder: Composition and Locational Memory in the Middle Ages': 888-891.

[53] Eaton. *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*; Lori Ann Gardner, *Structuring Spaces: Oral Poetics and Architecture in Early Medieval England*, Notre Dame, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011). Particularly the chapter on 'Architectural and Poetic Traditions'.

the twelfth-century includes vernacular buildings, churches, castles and landscape studies, while architectural historians focus on the stylistic transition from Romanesque to Gothic. David Stocker, John Blair, and Tim Eaton,[54] all of whom have examined Roman re-use in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, made progress towards a comprehensive survey of sites, but tended to limit themselves to classifying instances of re-use, and attempting to ascertain motive. This thesis will address these issues, but it will also examine who was involved in re-use processes, and try to understand the extent of the re-use of Roman remains, particularly how this affected those using and viewing re-use. This thesis adopts methodological as well as theoretical approaches from archaeology, espousing the discipline's material focus, objective survey and recording techniques and an understanding of meaning and agency in human actions (more below).

Art historical approaches have largely remained disconnected from literary scholarship despite sharing an essentially similar academic approach of close reading and theoretical analysis. Art history has tended to focus on decorative or decorated objects across the entirety of Europe, though sometimes it encompasses larger scale building items (such as columns or inscriptions).[55] Dale Kinney's excellent chapter on *spolia* provides an art historical perspective on the re-use of building material.[56] However this disciplinary influence means that her discussion of *spolia* is primarily concerned with decorative elements of architecture. Kinney introduces the intriguing mention of 'subversive' re-use to building material and this could be explored further in relation to hidden or covered re-use, which is one of the goals of this thesis. *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages* by Michael Greenhalgh provides a comprehensive survey of re-used objects in Italy, Northern Europe and England, yet he does not engage with literary, ideological and other verbal components of the classical legacy.[57] One exception can be found in Salvatore Settis' cohesively interdisciplinary understanding of texts and *spolia,* which states that "citations and topoi are spolia, conversely, spoliate objects are citations".[58] This project adopts the art historical concerns of display, decoration and *romanitas* but also combines them with a more archaeologically focussed concern for the materials of building, as well as references to previous topographical features and the built landscape.

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[54] David Stocker, 'Rubbish Re-cycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire', in *Stone: Quarrying and Building in England AD 43-1525* edited by David Parsons, (Sussex: Royal Archaeological Institute, 1990), 83-102; Blair, *The church in Anglo-Saxon society.* Chapter 4; Eaton. *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*.

[55] Dale Kinney, 'The Concept of Spolia' in Conrad Rudolph's *A Companion to Medieval Art*, (Malden, MA, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 233-252.

[56] Kinney, 'The Concept of Spolia', 233-252. Please note, this chapter contains an excellent synopsis of continental historiography which discusses re-use. Kinney laments the fact that most of this scholarship and its various classifications of re-use have been largely ignored by the English language tradition.

[57] Michael Greenhalgh, *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages.* (London: Duckworth, 1989), 7.

[58] Kinney, 'The Concept of Spolia', 244.

The historian, Hans Louis Janssen, has proposed a model by which history and archaeology can be integrated in the first and last phases of archaeological research – that is, the point where research questions are formed, and where the material record is correlated with historical events.[59] He states that the specialist skills acquired by each discipline, including the types of evidence and methodology, should be the only way in which historical and archaeological approaches differ. The theoretical interpretation of the evidence should be the prerogative of both historian and archaeologist; hence, Janssen's model is one of research design. Robin Fleming discusses the advantages and pitfalls of using material evidence from a historical perspective, and advocates its use both on a large scale and on an individual level.[60] She states that material culture is important precisely because it is often at odds with historical evidence and creates different chronologies to those often imposed upon historical epochs.[61] Other historians have raised methodological concerns in using both texts and material objects, saying that the inherent differences between text and object relates to their use of language. Amy Bentley states, "If we placed 'words' at one end of a continuum, and 'objects' at the other, there would not be a readily identifiable point at which one was distinct from the other".[62] This confirms the idea that the distinction between object and text, at least for theoretical purposes, needs to be deconstructed, one of the principal concerns of this thesis.

It is clear that both texts and the material record contributed to, and were affected by, the processes of Roman re-use in England. Different sites in each case study have varying types and amounts of literary material, and an engagement with documentary sources such as charters and annals in addition to hagiography, histories and praise poetry becomes necessary. The multiple types of archaeological evidence, ranging from the reoccupation of Roman sites, the re-use of building material, and the decorative incorporation of portable remains, can also be seen. Hence this thesis demonstrates a flexible methodology according to individual documents and material availability. But more than this, it strives to implement close textual criticism, as well as archaeological analysis of the process of re-use, which constitute theoretical approaches of each

[59] Hans Louis Janssen, 'Medieval Material Culture and the Problem of the Historical Interpretation of Archaeological Evidence: the Example of the Town of 's-Hertogenbosch', *Mensch und Objekt im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit. Leben – Alltag – Kultur* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), 403-405.

[60] See Fleming's historical studies which predominantly feature archaeological evidence: Robin Fleming, *Britain After Rome: The Fall and Rise, 400 to 1070*, (London: Allen Lane, 2010): Robin Fleming. "Bones for Historians: Putting the Body Back in Biography," in *Writing Medieval Biography: Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow*, edited by David Bates, Julia Crick, Sarah Hamilton, (Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 29-48.

[61] Fleming, *Britain After Rome: The Fall and Rise, 400 to 1070*, xx-xxii.

[62] Christopher Witmore adds that there is a "familiar and debilitating gap between words and the world". Leora Auslander, Amy Bentley, Sibum Halevi H. Otto, and Christopher Witmore, "AHR Conversation: Historians and the Study of Material Culture" *The American Historical Review* , Volume 114, Number 5 (2009): 1357, 1360.

discipline. Using an equal examination of evidence, the integration of different methodologies, and a cohesive theoretical approach, this thesis hopes to bridge, or at least, explores the distinctions between material culture and text. Above all, it hopes that interdisciplinary dialogue will contribute to full understanding of how and why Roman material culture was appropriated in the long twelfth-century.

2.2 Some theoretical perspectives

The re-use of material culture requires the actions of people, both in the creation of re-use and in the 'cultural remembering' which facilitates and reinforces the implicit messages of this process. This thesis proposes two types of agents in re-use processes: actors, such as builders or patrons; and audiences, either in the immediate post-Conquest period, or in generations afterwards. In order to understand the re-use process, we must establish who was responsible for literary and building projects which utilised Roman physical remains, along with their motivations for doing so. This process will illuminate patterns of re-use and the motives behind it, and it will also establish that certain key historical figures, such as the king, other members of the Anglo-Norman elite, heads of religious houses and the general populace, participated in twelfth-century cultural production.

This thesis will examine who commissioned or sponsored building projects which utilised Roman stonework, occupied principal sites, or featured Roman building techniques. This thesis will also examine who was responsible for the patronage of literary production, as well as those who authored texts which discuss the re-use of Roman material culture. The re-use of Roman material culture in Anglo-Norman buildings and literature held multivalent meanings dependent on the various audiences with which they interacted. Consider the wealthy Norman abbot or king who patronised buildings which re-used Roman fabric, and whose understanding of the process may have meant something very different to the builder who conducted the actual work, or members of society who experienced the space in which Roman remains were re-used.

Meaning does not remain static, and re-use was not a single event of building or writing, but rather a continual process of re-evaluation and re-mediation. Re-use of Roman material culture would have had different implications in a cloistered monastic environment versus a military or urban setting; additionally, 'audience' could imply those who immediately viewed the re-use, or those who used the space or artefact for years to come. The audiences of Roman re-use could comprise of other elites, as well as lower status individuals. The historical and social backgrounds of each town affected the ways in which re-use was perceived and its meanings communicated (such as social control and imperial power). Each case study explores the inherent

difference between elite or lay audiences, Audience allows us to understand the relationship between re-use and its wider social, cultural and political implications. Participants in Anglo-Norman culture were the medium by which ideas about re-use were transmitted and reinforced, and the re-use itself was a product of those who participate in it. Re-use and its audience thus had a relationship that was both recursive and reflective.

All material culture is meaningfully constituted: it is made by *someone* for *something*, as an inherently conscious and often meaningful act.[63] That the material record functions as a form of language which can be read, understood, broken down into its component grammatical forms and used to access its author, is one of the main tenets of the post-processual archaeological approach.[64] In an archaeological sense, this means that the archaeological record functions as a sign or symbol, and the form of the objects themselves are of less consequence than what they mean to the viewer. This is a central tenet of re-use theory, as it demonstrates that the object of re-use carries meaning which is interpreted according to particular cultural norms. The re-used physical material is the 'signifier' (or object which carries the meaning); and the 'signified' meaning is allusions to the Roman past translated into a new context, as a socio-political marker for the twelfth-century observer.[65]

The concept of 'transportation', where a message is communicated effectively, can be seen when Roman material is interpreted by its audience as it was originally intended by Anglo-Norman builders. In this case, the act of re-use accesses pre-existing information already held by the recipient.[66] The message of re-use is only effectively communicated if the recipient is familiar with the 'cultural content' of the message, but the audience may also bring new understanding and their own interpretation of Roman material remains. Generally, "audiences can be expected to be familiar with the 'codes' that are used to transmit material".[67] In this case, these 'codes' refer to ideas about Roman Britain and *romanitas* which would have already been familiar to a twelfth-century audience of re-use, promoting the idea that these messages were part of a wider socio-cultural milieu. What is most interesting for this particular topic is the survival of such cultural codes through over six hundred years of socio-political upheaval in England. *Romanitas*, and associated Roman material remains were very strong signifiers indeed.

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[63] Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past: Current approaches to interpretation in archaeology,* third edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6- 10.

[64] Matthew Johnson, *Archaeological Theory*, second edition, (United Kingdom: Blackwell, 2010), 109-111.

[65] This idea comes from post-modern critical theory, sociology and linguistics which examine semiotics or semantic structures in terms of 'the signifier and the signified'. Theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard have developed these ideas from a post-structuralist literary perspective.

[66] Arthur Asa Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory.* (California: Sage Publications, 1995), 55.

[67] Diana Crane. *The Production of Culture: Media and the Urban Art*, (California: Sage Publications, 1992), 106.

The meaning of a text or object can acquire new or different levels of meaning if people's perception and the context of the material is altered. This 'play of signs' (to use Jacques Derrida's term) tells us that meaning is inherently unstable. The translation of an object into a new place or a reinterpretation of its cultural signification according to new temporal or spatial frameworks at once retains and *changes* its inherent meaning. The *romanitas* present in the Roman materials cannot be completely erased, but carries meaning that was both known and unknown in its received twelfth-century culture. Re-use "proceeds from the same ambiguous motives of homage and rivalry"; meaning that the re-use of a particular object undergoes a process of both emulation and comparison. [68] Philippe Buc proposes that object-conversion establishes a relationship of "superiority" of the object's present status over its past, and signifies a transferral of power.[69] This means that, as an object is translated, it carries its previous meanings, but these become secondary to its new commemorative purpose. In a twelfth-century context, ideas about empire and military supremacy in Britain were transmitted via the re-used Roman remains, while at the same time, they are used to promote, and are thus somewhat superseded by, the new Norman political and social order.

The agency of human actors is an important consideration in any discourse on re-use, as this was essentially a human process, carried out in aid of human activities. Bruno Latour first developed ideas of materiality and agency as a source of action which can be either human or non-human, and provides what he calls 'mediators' and group formation around objects.[70] He tells us that "things do not exist without being full of people", but that considering humans necessarily involves the consideration of things.[71] This blurs the distinction between human agent and object, which is a useful approach for re-use theory as it shows that human actors and the object of re-use both participated in narratives of transference and translation.[72] Arjun Appadurai argues that

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[68] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), 49.

[69] Philippe Buc, 'Conversion of Objects', *Viator* Volume 28 (1997): 110, 138, 123-7.

[70] Jane Bennet. 'Preface' in *Vibrant Matter: A political ecology of things*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), vii-xxi. p viii.

[71] Bill Brown. 'Thing Theory' *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Things (2001): 12.

[72] Some theorists take this idea of material agency a step further, and ascribe greater and great autonomy to the object. Jane Bennet examines the dynamism of objects when she discusses objects that do not simply have agency or intentionality in how we perceive them, but that their 'life' extends and acts upon human responses. She discusses the "capacity of things… to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own". This would mean that Roman material remains exert a theoretical form of influence upon their human users. In a discussion of ownership and property, Jonathan Lamb talks about the emergence of object-agency through an increasing preoccupation with personal possession. His careful analysis of the ways in which objects 'speak' and exert their will upon their surroundings, demonstrates that it is not simply their function for humans which creates meaning. The 2001 journal of *Critical Inquiry* edited by Bill Brown entitled 'Things' promotes this new object oriented model of "Thing Theory", whereby humans share agency with objects. This is the beginning of an understanding of both

"even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context."[73] This implies that an object is not simply one thing, but that it has different meanings and different 'valences' in different situations, and also potentially within the same situation.[74] Here then, materiality relates to differences in meaning and agency as the object moves. A wholesale adoption of the theory of material agency is not a useful approach for this thesis, as this thesis instead focuses particularly on human actions and meaning in relation to objects of re-use. However, material and object theories do help us recognise the capacity for object-oriented meaning in the past and show how these differ from human applied meanings. These ideas inform contextual translation, and explain how material acquired new meaning in the different temporal and spatial locations which characterise the re-use process.

2.3 Towards a model of re-use

This thesis owes a considerable debt to previous scholarship which considers material and literary re-use. Despite some of the methodological and contextual limitations of existing studies, this research provides a valuable foundation and historiographical framework with which to analyse the concept and attributes of re-use. A consideration of re-use will be an inherently fragmented exercise, and the reader must be aware that any formal model will be a representation of a multivalent theoretical approach. There is no common methodology or source material of re-use, and, as Dale Kinney states, re-use "might better be considered as a theme of categories".[75] We can never truly 'know' the motivations and mindset of medieval people, but we are able to approach a more nuanced interpretation of the drivers of re-use if instances are appraised within their particular social and historical contexts, and in light of theoretical models of consciousness and intentionality in visual display. The thesis seeks to understand ideas about meaning and consciousness of re-use, cost, audience, agency, Norman identity, political statements and cultural memory, which have come to pervade the discourse on re-use. Ideas about movement and materiality address the shift from one state to another, such as from book to

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objects and people having agency and ascribing meaning within the re-use process. Both the material and the user are in a process of remediation and renegotiation of an object's value. Bennet. 'Preface', vii-xxi; Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 2001), 6-8; Kellie Robertson. 'Medieval materialism: a manifesto' *Exemplaria*, Vol. 22 No. 2 (2010): 100.

[73] Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value' in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* , (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986), 5.

[74] Patricia Spyer tells us that however materially stable objects may seem, they are different things in different scenes. Patricia Spyer. *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Places*, (New York: Routledge, 1998).

[75] Kinney, 'The Concept of Spolia', 234.

film, or manuscript to digital database, and they are concerned fundamentally with how such a transition alters the form and cultural meaning of the original.

In order to determine how medieval people appropriated Roman remains, we must first obtain a uniform understanding of re-use. This requires a methodological approach which remains relatively similar across deviating case-study conditions. In this thesis, all surviving buildings or archaeological remains which re-used Roman remains, built from 1066-1200 are examined. The majority of major monumental construction occurred in the earlier part of this period, and parish and other remains sometimes were built up until the 1180s. The methodology of this thesis consists of visual analysis and a photographic record, with an analysis of desk-based reports allowing for a large part of the understanding of phasing or excavations. From this, we can determine the positioning, access and visibility of Roman remains, and then try to recreate any patterns of deterioration or later robbing. All of this reveals how Norman builders, patrons and audiences engaged with material re-use, and goes part-way in explaining how they may have perceived this in relation to other cultural practices.

The analysis of texts for this thesis involves surveying all literature concerned with the sites in question, with a particular focus on what was produced at the case-study site or in the wider local environment. This enables an understanding of how medieval people may have interacted with the site, and whether they felt it necessary to discuss aspects of re-use. In some cases, a translation of passages from Latin is required, meaning that less relevant parts of the text may not be examined with particular depth. However, the passages which describe Roman remains or detail Roman re-use are all comprehensively examined for their particular literary approaches. The texts examined in this thesis are collated from various literary genres, meaning that a versatile and ad-hoc approach is sometimes required for their interpretation, but this thesis takes care to examine each text in light of its background and literary style.

There are variations in how different scholars define re-use, and visual display and purpose play a large role in the formation of these definitions. For art historians, *spolia* generally comprises material artefacts which have a decorative or aesthetic purpose as part of their intrinsic value as items of antiquity. These objects can be portable, and are often imbued with deep significance which ensures their translation into the new setting. For art historians, building material is not generally considered to be *spolia*, as it had a practical function in both its Roman past and new medieval setting. Anthony Cutler has even argued that re-use is not the same as *spolia*, because *spolia* only applies to the translation of an object whose function and meaning is

altered.[76] This thesis constructs a definition of re-use which operates in addition to the art historical definition of *spolia*. It examines building material and topographical and hidden re-use, in addition to the traditional art historical concerns of decoration and portable artefacts.

The antiquarian understanding of re-use was often limited to noting where it had occurred in buildings, and often resulted in curious interpretations of motive or practical application.[77] The advent of a structured theoretical approach to re-use was first developed in the discipline of art history, with a series of French and German studies in the mid-twentieth century.[78] Erwin Panofsky and Arnold Esch theorised re-use (termed *spolia* in an art historical context), with Esch's five essential explanations for its existence: convenience and availability; profanation or exorcism of demonic force; *interpretatio christiana* (or the re-interpretation of pagan objects in a Christian light, often to purge its original associations); retrodating or political legitimation; and aesthetic wonderment or admiration.[79]

This thesis would substitute 'exorcism' with Norman attempts to 'outdo' their predecessors, and many cases display multiple elements of these definitions. *Interpretatio christinani* also functions in religious settings, as Roman remains were re-used in monastic or parochial environments for their association with the Roman church. Retrodating and political legitimation ensured that secular Norman powers could legitimate the antiquity of their rule in England through an association with Roman imperial power. A sense of wonderment can also be seen in Norman re-use, as aesthetic display was often used to convey association with Rome in an

[76] Anthony Cutler, 'Re-use or Use? Theoretical and Practical Attitudes Toward Objects in the Early Middle Ages', in *Ideologie e pratiche del reompiego nell'alto medio,* (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1999), 1063-1064.

[77] For example, J.C. and C.A. Buckler, the mid-nineteenth surveyors of St Albans cathedral, believed that the use of *tegulae* piles in the construction of the foundations of the massive crossing piers of the abbey church demonstrated an emulation of Roman hypocaust construction. This is a fairly untenable association, as a result of the entirely different building forms of Roman domestic/bath floors versus a substantial load bearing pillar of the High Middle Ages. J.C. and C.A. Buckler *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban with particular reference to the Norman structure.* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1847).

[78] For an excellent summary of art historical approaches to *spolia* studies, see Kinney, 'The Concept of Spolia' 234-252.

[79] Arnold Esch, 'Spolien. Zur Weiderverwendung antiker Baustücke und Skulpturen im mittelalterlichen Italien', *Archiv fur Kulturegeschichte,* Volume 51, (1969): 1-64. Primarily an art historical term, *interpretatio christiani* refers to the reinterpretation of classical artefacts, normally sculptural items, with a new Christian purpose. Arnold Esch gives the examples of a statue of Pan turned into John the Baptist, and marble *putto* believed to be angels. Arnold Esch, 'On the re-use of Antiquity; The Perspectives of the Archaeologist and of the Historian' in *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine,* edited by Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate 2011), 19-21. Dale Kinney allows us to understand *interpretatio Christiana* through the medium of metaphor and biblical exegesis, which, she argues, was especially relevant to an understanding of Roman church interiors. Dale Kinney, 'Spolia as Signifiers in Twelfth-Century Rome', *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, Volume 17 (2011), 151-166. It is unorthodox to suggest that this term applies to re-use of wider landscapes, but it clearly explains processes of Christianisation relating to Roman remains in the medieval period.

overt manner. Insightful debates within the discipline of art history existed long before the advent of post-processual archaeology explorations of re-use. However, a severe disjuncture occurred between the two different disciplinary approaches, and major archaeological studies of re-used do not seem to have engaged with more developed art-historical perspectives.

The art historian, Dale Kinney, has stated that that the archaeological definition of conscious re-use of an object is more akin to the concept of *spolia,* where the person carrying out the act understands the object's previous purpose or perceived meaning and removes its function by reinterpreting it for display.[80] David Stocker promoted an archaeological model which draws distinctions between casual or practical re-use, and re-use which implicitly references aspects of an object's past function as an act of iconic display.[81] This model, in its incorporation of a purely casual economic rationale, does not acknowledge that, however pragmatically the act of re-use may have been undertaken, it still involves some understanding that the object existed in another context. There can be no such thing as true casual re-use, as once an object is displaced, then the user must be aware that it comes from somewhere else.

Secondary scholarship cites the problematic nature of terminology in the discourse of *spolia* and the re-use of building material,[82] and the thesis calls for a simplification of such ideas. The reuse of building material should be historicised and contextualised, rather than relying on ill-defined, generalised terminology. Evidence from the case studies also challenges the tendency of art historical studies to prioritise of decorative objects over building material when assessing the meanings behind spoliation. The role of individual agency in the re-use of building material, whether builder, patron, contemporary audience or an audience viewing re-use fifty or one hundred years later is an additional consideration. These people range from the highest echelons of the Anglo-Norman elite to those who used local buildings on a daily basis, and all participated in the culture of re-use which recognised and disseminated ideas about the Roman building material.

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[80] Dale Kinney, 'Ancient gems in the Middle Ages: riches and ready-mades', *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, edited by Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 112.

[81] David Stocker's model is one such, where casual and practical re-use occur if an object is used for economic reasons as a cheap source of building stone, and the past history of the object is unknown. Meaningful re-use occurs only when an object is displayed in such a way that indicates an understanding of the object's past, referencing these meanings in order to create or supplement an ideological purpose. Stocker, 'Rubbish Re-cycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire', 83-102.

[82] Michael Greenhalgh's review of *spolia* discourse provides a critique of much of the terminology which surrounds this concept. Greenhalgh argues that re-use and spolia studies perpetuate ill-defined understandings of the motives and dialogue of re-use. While he is critical of the use of terms such as memory, power and consciousness, Greenhalgh admits that if correctly evidenced, these terms may still apply. Michael Greenhalgh, '*Spolia*: A Definition in Ruins', in *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, edited by Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 75-97.
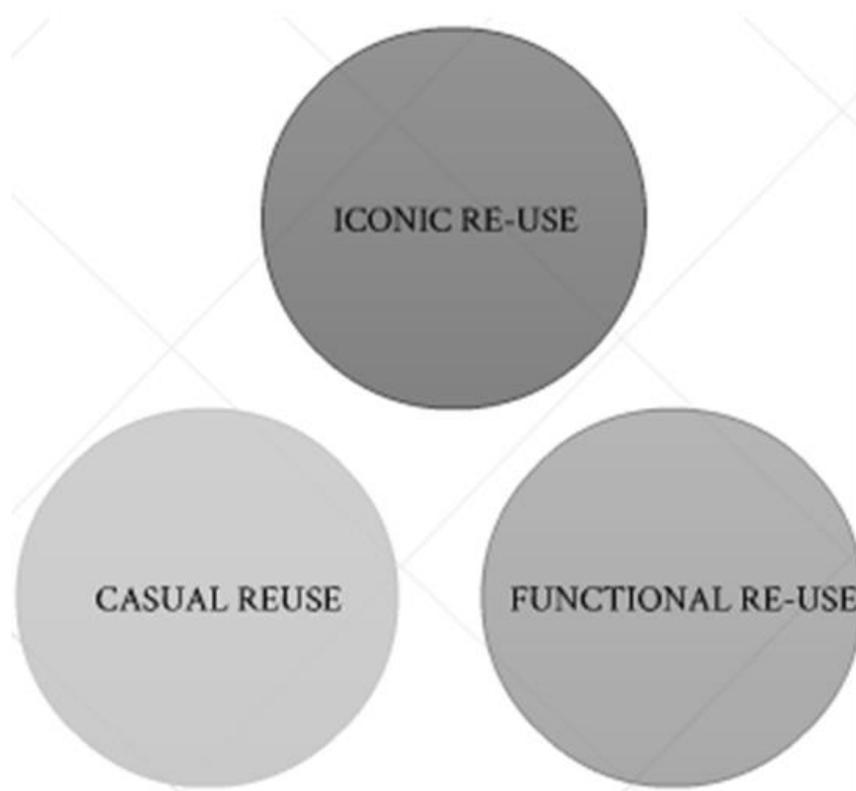
Figure 1:

Stocker's tripartite model of re-use. Taken from Eaton, after Figure 68

David Stocker provides a definition of re-use defined by certain typologies, functions and intentions, in a tripartite model with divisions of casual, functional and iconic re-use (Figure 1, above). He also outlines some methods of identifying re-used stonework.[83] 'Casual' re-use is defined as "cases where the original function of the stone is disregarded in its new re use".[84] This includes stones that are re-cut or 'turned in' to the wall face and the use of wall rubble or large scale building material in a haphazard way such as at the church at Bracebridge in Lincolnshire.[85] Stocker outlines functional re-use as those pieces which have been re-used in the purpose for which they were originally cut. This class of re-use is primarily an insight into concerns of cost or convenience, in which the salvaging and repositioning of Roman stonework is undertaken because it was the easiest way to acquire necessary building materials. This inherently functional schema creates a set of architectural typologies which are useful for identifying the purpose of

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[83] These include: the presence of Lewis holes visible in a wall face, stone and geological types identifiable by region, and inscription or decoration; which is practical advice useful for any study of re-use. Stocker, 'Rubbish Re-cycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire', 83-86.

[84] Stocker, 'Rubbish Re-cycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire', 86.

[85] Stocker, 'Rubbish Re-cycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire', 84.

stonework, but not any of its additional characteristics which are so useful for discussing the act of re-use.

Functional re-use does not engage with the meaning behind the re-use, nor does it explain why things may have been selected for use in a similar context. At best, a functional appraisal of re-use helps us to define and clarify instances of re-use, but fails to explain why these choices may have been made beyond their placement in similar settings. Stocker's third category, iconic re-use, prescribes that "particular stones brought particular associations" and could "employ their antiquity in a didactic or iconic way". Stocker understands that this form of re-use is interesting precisely, one would argue, because it is the most prevalent and important part of any understanding of re-use. Stocker's discussions of consciousness inform this thesis, as it is an understanding of consciousness which allow us to understand particular motives of re-use. Norman re-use ranged from economic need to a highly conspicuous display which evoked the Roman past. Stocker introduces our understanding of the different factors of re-use, from which the later archaeologist, Tim Eaton, drew.

Despite the simplicity of his model, Stocker raised important issues about cost, repositioning and the ways in which we identify re-use. If we are to reduce re-use to a matter of simple economics, where the choices of quarrying, importing or salvaging and re-using from pre-existing buildings dominate the discourse, then we are robbed of any ability to create a complex understanding of why these particular choices were made in the first place. It will become clear from the case studies in this thesis that a direct correlation between importance of site, and the supposedly more expensive task of quarrying of fresh stone as opposed to re-using stone, is simplistic and unreliable. Questions of cost versus other motivations arise often in this thesis; and the reader must be alerted to the danger of using cost alone to determine the motivation for the re-use of Roman material culture in Anglo-Norman buildings.
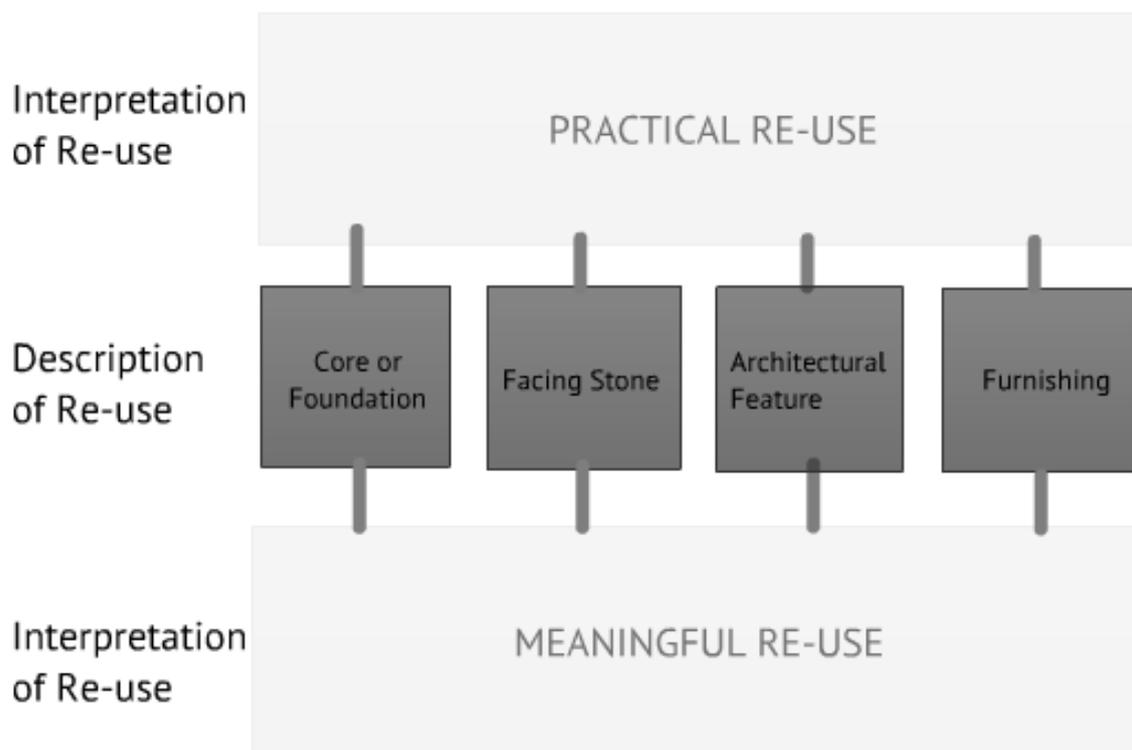
Figure 2: Taken from Eaton, after figure 69

Eaton builds upon Stocker's model, creating an understanding of re-use which centred on description of an object's function in the translated setting. Eaton proposes that that an object could have been re-used for a variety of practical and meaningful purposes (meaning that it has multiple meanings). Eaton states that when re-use occurred for symbolic or iconic reasons, it was "as a means of enhancing an individual's social position and authority, or even that of a whole community or institution".[86] The political and social motivations of Norman builders affected their attempts to convey the past through processes of re-use. Eaton also raises the concept of intentionality (agency) and the choice of objects for the purposes of display. He further develops Stocker's theory of iconic re-use to include not only current political motives, but an impression of longevity which referenced the political authority of the past: "the past was being used to generate both authority and kudos".[87]

Eaton, however, does not discuss who exactly this authority and kudos was used by, and for what audiences it was intended. His idea of agency is general, and this thesis hope to create a more specified understanding of the actors in this process. In Eaton's model, the re-use of Roman material still moves beyond a practical and functional approach to allow greater understanding of

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[86] This is informed by a post-processual archaeological approach whereby political considerations are inherent in any understanding of the past. Eaton, *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, 12.

[87] Eaton, *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, 134.

its meaning and authorial intentions. In a refinement of the model proposed by Stocker, Eaton proposes instead a two-part model of re-use (see figure 2, above). In this, the descriptive element of re-use is divorced from the interpretive, and the motive for re-use has been simplified to two straightforward categories: "Practical re-use, where the inspiration was one of economy, convenience, professional preference or technological necessity; and meaningful re-use, where exploitation arose from an appreciation of the material's age-value or esotericism".[88]

Eaton proposes that the current tripartite model favoured by archaeologists after Stocker is limited by its inability to explain instances of re-use in non-visual contexts.[89] This issue is of key relevance to this project. In the case studies, Roman building material was frequently re-used in Romanesque contexts which were plastered or whitewashed, and the foundations of Roman structures were incorporated into high status Norman secular buildings with a strong political purpose. Eaton discusses this re-use of Roman material in the foundations or other inaccessible locations as deriving meaning from the act of re-use itself, rather than solely the visibility of that material to audiences. This creates a situation whereby the builders or patrons who commissioned the re-use of Roman material intended to create meaningful statements which referenced Roman culture. Re-use in this sense may have been intended for display for an immediate audience, or it may have been intended to retain its meanings for future audiences (in which case, it may have ultimately acquired different meanings).

Tim Eaton's preoccupation with descriptions of re-use appears dangerously close to an analysis of function, which is inherently tied to attempts to create an understanding of style. Formal and functional typologies are now no longer the only means by which we can arrive at an understanding of an object, and these tend to abstract archaeological material from their original context. Eaton's model tries to use a 'value-less' description of an object in order to classify it, but in doing so, he commits the very assumptions which he took such pains to try and avoid. Similarly, textual scholars who write about the twelfth century are often concerned with where a particular classical reference has originated from, and devote a great deal of energy to establishing relationships with similar 'typological literary tropes'. If we are to overcome this, we need to remove such generalisations from any formal model of re-use. Instead, this model also suggests an individual analysis of all types of re-use, in order to fully understand their context and elaborate on their meaning, which may be separate from the above schema.

Eaton also proposes that re-use previously understood as functional (e.g. an arch for an arch) negates the view that the reuse of rubble or coarse material could also be infused with

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[88] Eaton, *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, 135.

[89] Eaton, *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, 134.

meaning. As large parts of the Essex and Hertfordshire case-studies in this thesis are concerned with flint and tile construction, which often appear fairly haphazard in episodes of re-use, the concept that bulk building stonework could be meaningfully constituted is essential for developing a full understanding of the post-Conquest Norman environment. There are many cases where the re-use of Roman stone was a more cost-effective mode of building, but it was also demonstrably differently meaningful in the context of these particular twelfth-century towns than quarrying new stone or than importing Caen stone from Normandy.[90] Using cost and convenience as the primary basis upon which to build an understanding of re-use results in the disregard of meaningful motivations, and over-simplifies the complex range of drivers that lay behind re-use.

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[90] Tim Eaton's analysis of building stone at Chepstow castle provides a situation where the cost of transporting re-used stone over great distances was greater than sourcing it locally. David Parsons tells us that widespread recycling in the Anglo-Saxon period meant that there was no fresh quarrying taking place; then he mentions that quarrying was being undertaken at sites of importance. Tim Eaton, 'Counting the cost at Chepstow' in *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing, 2000), 31-57; David Parsons, 'Review and Prospect: The Stone Industry in Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval England' in *Stone: Quarrying and Building in England AD 43-1525* edited by David Parsons, (Sussex: Royal Archaeological Institute, 1990), 5.

Object or text
Has acquired new meanings and translated old ones

By a human agent, which is....

Meaningful
Conscious
Subconscious
Unconscious

and also affected by.... Practical considerations
(such as cost, or access to building supplies)

Undergoes re-use process of 'cultural remembering'

This is the physical translation into a new setting

This is perceived by a twelfth century audience, who undergo the same process of cultural remembering

Object or text
Which exerts its own agency and meanings

Figure 3: A new model of re-use

A final model for an understanding of re-use needs to address the themes already developed by current theories of re-use. These are concerned with function, agency, materiality and audience; inherent or applied meaning; as well as practical matters such as building and cost considerations. One must examine attempts to negotiate a version of civic, monastic and military memory, and we must also understand the construction of the past which Norman builders and writers wished to project. Re-use can operate at any level along these two continuums. To develop Stocker's categorisation of meaning into discrete parts, this model integrates the casual approach to re-use with iconic approaches, so that this model is best applied in a graph with two axes, rather than a Venn diagram. This model allows for the possibility that elements of meaning and practical function may overlap, or that one instance of re-use embodies several motivating factors.

A criticism of the pre-existing models of re-use is that 'functional re-use' correlates style with motivation by blurring descriptions of the re-use with underlying objectives. The "functional re-use category consisted of those pieces which have been re-used for the purpose for which they were originally cut: doorways re-used as doorways, for example, or windows re-used as windows". Despite these issues, David Stocker and Tim Eaton's models of re-use inform the creation of a new model, which adopts Stocker's levels of meaning, and builds upon Eaton's understanding of function through the incorporation of different types of evidence. This model is also general enough that specific motivations for re-use, such as those proposed by Arnold Esch, can be incorporated. This model is based upon a need to incorporate agency and audience in the re-use process, as well as maintaining relevance when applied to literary re-use. Just as re-use was a process of re-interpretation, the re-used object underwent the same processes of re-interpretation by audiences in its new setting.

In this model, the object or text begins with attached meanings and cultural references, and is then subjected to a physical translation when it is moved into a new setting by a human agent. The agent perceives the object's inherent original meanings, and then translates both object and associated meanings into a different physical context. This is the principal part of the re-use process, where the agent is complicit in the re-interpretation of material remains. The author, patron or builder participates in a 'remembering' of Roman culture in their understanding of the object, which applies equally to building materials and texts. This 'remembering' is a vital part of the translation process as it evokes the original setting and becomes part of the object's new meaning. This model also takes into a consideration of audience, as participators in a wider twelfth-century cultural milieu, which, upon perceiving the act of re-use, also undergoes the same memorialisation process as the original agent. Thus, the above model is an ongoing, recursive process, where once an instance of re-use has occurred and is perceived by an audience, it obtains and creates new meanings in order to be reintegrated into the wider culture in which it is re-used.

This model presents the idea that meaning exists along a spectrum: one can re-use an object completely unintentionally, or the agent can have a understanding of the object's original meanings. Re-use may even be a conscious act, and in many instances in the case studies, re-use is deliberate and highly meaningful. *Romanitas* and the understanding of an object's association with the culture of ancient Rome ranged from an unconscious association with ideas of empire or Roman culture, or it could be re-use in a meaningful way, designed to reference the authority, antiquity and institutional associations of classical culture. Practical considerations such as cost and functional suitability of the re-used material are included on the alternative axis to the spectrum of consciousness in re-use. Re-use has been considered on a twin axis of meaning and practicality in this model, so as to avoid the compartmentalisation of meaning vs. practicality considerations when discussing re-use. Both of these motivations may be equally valid, and should be understood in conjunction with each other.

Literary texts considered by this thesis may have subconsciously referenced Roman remains because they were participating in a wider culture of classical references; or they may have been designed for posterity, revealing the specific intentions of the authors and their deliberate classicising. In contrast, the practical function of lower-status buildings meant they were sometimes not designed for future audiences with overt displays of re-use. This means that textual culture and material remains often demonstrate differing levels of intentionality and meaning in their longevity. More often than not, the texts considered in these case studies contain deliberate attempts to reference the Roman past, so they therefore occupy the more meaningful end of the re-use spectrum. Despite these differences, textual re-use and references to Roman remains can be plotted according to this model, just as easily as the re-use of material objects.

No action is ever truly meaningless, and meaning is present in all texts and material culture. This thesis argues that meaningless use of Roman building stone can never be completely identified, and the very act of such recutting 'turning-in' places a value judgement upon the function or aesthetic appeal of the original stonework. Stocker seems to believe that it is possible to identify the original meaning and context of re-used stonework but these meanings may not necessarily be recoverable. All acts of re-use position the stone in a new context and inherently alter its meaning, therefore the 'functional' category of re-use is rendered fairly redundant. This thesis will also demonstrate that the more nuanced, case-study approach allows for an exploration not only of meaning for Anglo-Norman patrons, builders and audiences, but also, as will be seen, for the historical legacy of towns and their creation of urban foundation myths in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries.

Chapter Three: St Albans

3.1 Introduction and history of St Albans

The re-use of material culture at St Albans reveals a diversity of re-use practices, both in literary references to Roman buildings, and the physical integration of Roman materials into Norman remains. The martyrdom of England's first saint, St Alban, in the late-Roman period emphasised the importance of the built Roman environment, and the Roman landscape was used as the setting for later monastic accounts of his Passion. The topography and major buildings of the Roman town became a source of literary inspiration describing the Roman past at St Albans in the late-Saxon period, and these historicised imaginings served a variety of purposes for the monks of the Norman Abbey in the twelfth- and thirteenth centuries. The re-use of Roman and early Christian sites was common at St Albans, as were the emulation of Roman building practices and decoration.

The re-use of building material can be seen in both parish churches and the Norman monastic church, with varying levels of associated meaning. There are also small or isolated portable Roman finds which were reappropriated for various purposes by the Norman abbey. Some instances of post-Conquest re-use continued and propagated earlier Anglo-Saxon traditions, though as we shall see, this was often expressed differently due to the political and religious agenda of the Anglo-Norman abbots at St Albans. This chapter explores the development of St Albans over the course of its long history, demonstrating how Roman remains were used to express aspects of the monastery's past, and became part of the inherent consciousness of the town. It shows how the Abbey and town appropriated material culture from Roman Verulamium, and the multivalent messages and meanings derived from this act of cultural reclamation during the Norman period.

This chapter engages fully with the research of Rosalind Nibblett and Isabelle Thompson, who have comprehensively surveyed most of the archaeological and architectural remains of St Albans. Apart from this, the British Archaeological Association conference volume features chapters on many of the outstanding remains found at Roman Verulamium and Medieval St Albans, including several chapters on the Norman abbey. Nibblett and Thompson's text goes partway to an amalgamation of architectural and literary resources, with the inclusion of a textual appendix. However, this thesis examines many of the featured texts in far greater detail, providing a close reading of several previously un-transcribed texts which discuss Roman remains at the town. This thesis also provides a comprehensive survey of the abbey fabric where it has re-used Roman remains, something which is non-existent after the initial nineteenth-century antiquarian surveys. This chapter will also expand upon known literary information about the Roman theatre, proposing a new schema to evaluate the Roman theatre as a medieval mnemonic device, using the

work of Mary Carruthers on memory. Finally, this chapter offers insight into the origins, architectural preferences, and personal networks of historical figures associated with re-use practices in St Albans.

St Albans is located in Hertfordshire, approximately thirty-five kilometres on a route north-west of London, and sites around the town have been in continuous occupation since the prehistoric era (a timeline summarising major events at St Albans from the Roman period to the High Middle Ages can be found in Table 1 at the end of this introductory section). St Albans was the location of an important Iron Age settlement and briefly a Roman fortress, which was later redesigned and became flourishing Roman town.[91] The only documented Romano-British martyrdom supposedly took place there in the late-Roman period, from which the later town of St Albans derived its name.[92] The legacy of the Roman town and the early Christian martyrdom has left a lasting impact upon the historical development of all subsequent periods, making it an interesting and unique case study for the examination of Roman re-use in the Norman period.

The late Iron-Age *oppidum*, Verlamion, occupied the area which was for a time the stronghold of the Catavellauni king, Tasciovanus.[93] With the Roman conquest in 54 BC, the Catavellauni became a client tribe to the Romans, and Tacitus' account of the Boudiccan rebellion, over a hundred years later, mentions the city's destruction using its Latinised name of Verulamium.[94] The Roman town occupied a site south of the River Ver in a valley floor, near a widening of the water which later became known as the King's Fish pool in the Middle Ages. Major structures were rebuilt in stone following the Boudiccan destruction, and the town was rededicated in AD 79, probably in the presence of Agricola.[95] Occupation of the town was continuous and increasingly prosperous for the next two centuries, before a decline in the fourth and fifth centuries, with the eventual near-abandonment of the Roman town site by 500.[96]

The first reference to the martyrdom of St Alban comes from Constantius of Lyon's *Vita Sancti Germani*, composed around 480,[97] which describes St Germanus' visit to the shrine of St

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[91] Julia Crick. 'Introduction', *Charters of St Albans,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

[92] Nibblett explains "at present there is no consensus as to the date of Alban's martyrdom, other than that it must have occurred sometime in the third or fourth centuries. Rosalind Niblett, *Verulamium: the Roman city of St. Albans,* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), 138. Martin Biddle gives the date as 303 AD.

[93] Coinage found in the area attests that fortification dykes to the south side of the Roman town were built and used in the century proceeding Roman occupation. Sheppard Frere, 'Verulamium' in *Cathedral and city: St Albans ancient and modern,* edited by Robert Runcie, (Great Britain: Martyn Associates, 1977), 6.

[94] Nibblett. *Verulamium: the Roman city of St. Albans,* 67.

[95] The dedication stone was discovered in 1955 in the St Michael's School yard after it fell from a doorway. Frere, 'Verulamium', 13.

[96] Frere, 'Verulamium', 22.

[97] Julia Crick posits 480 AD as the date of composition if the *Vita Sancti Germani*, Ireland says 470 AD.

Alban to give thanks for the dispersal of the Pelagian heresy in 429 ('sacerdotes beatum Albanum martyrem, acturi Deo per ipsum gratias, petierunt').[98] Constantius does not provide any geographical detail however, and it is not until Gildas' account of the martyrdom in *De Excidio Brittonum* written c540,[99] that we find St Alban associated with Verulamium-'sanctum Albanum Verolamiensem'.[100] In this instance, Gildas does not place the martyrdom necessarily at St Albans; he merely states that Alban was a citizen of the city.[101] Gildas' account of the martyrdom poses several problems of location and chronology, and suggests that he did not have access to accurate information about the site and the dating of the martyrdom.[102] E.A. Thompson asserts, "it would have been so difficult for an historian living in the sixth century to know the history of the Roman occupation of Britain", and that "Gildas was a brilliant innovator and may have fabricated much of his history".[103] Sharpe adds, "His dating the British martyrdoms to this period was, by his own admission, a conjecture".[104] Clearly, in this section he embellished the account of the martyrdom beyond Constantius' initial short description.

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[98] Martin Biddle, 'Alban and the Anglo-Saxon Church' in *Cathedral and city: St Albans ancient and modern* edited by Robert Runcie, (Great Britain: Martyn Associates, 1977), 27.

[99] R. Sharpe, 'The Late Antique Passion of St Alban', in *Alban and St Albans: Roman and Medieval Architecture, Art, and Archaeology,* edited by Martin Henig and Phillip Linley, (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 2001), 30.

[100] Gildas. *The Ruin of Britain and other works,* edited by Michael Winterbottom. (London and Chichester: Phillimore and Co. Ltd, 1978), 92.

[101] Levison discusses the probability that the martyrdom actually took place at Verulamium, using a process of elimination regarding the martyrdoms of Aaron and Julius mentioned in the same passage. He states that Gildas would not have bothered putting their places of origin if they were martyred in the same place, and he did not correctly mention the rivers of each respective town. Crick supports this argument by stating that "Christianity within the empire was concentrated in urban populations, and Verulamium constituted one of the most important urban centres of Roman Britain", therefore it was a likely place for such an event. Wilhelm Levison, 'St Alban and St Albans', *Antiquity,* Volume 15, Number 60 (1941): 340; Crick, *Charters of St Albans*, 5.

[102] The description of the topography during the martyrdom features St Alban opening a path across a river so that the townsfolk can safely cross to where the martyrdom takes place. This is a common hagiographical topos, and Gildas himself likens it to the crossing of the Jordan by the Israelites. Julia Crick describes this account as 'stylised' because Gildas does not provide any concrete details for identifying the site, and he did not correctly name the river at Verulamium, calling it the Thames. He also states that the shrine of St Alban was cut off from access by the English- "[We] have been deprived of many of them by unhappy partition with the barbarians". This evidence demonstrates that Gildas did not have had access to the terrain or knowledge of the town site of Verulamium. This account is confused further by the fact that Gildas chose to locate the martyrdom within the persecutions of Diocletian, which did not take place in England.

Crick, *Charters of St Albans*, 5; Gildas. *The Ruin of Britain and other works,* 92; E.A. Thompson, 'Gildas and the History of Britain'. *Britannia*, Volume 10. (1979): 208; J Morris, 'The Date of St Alban', *Hertfordshire Archaeology* Volume 1 (1983 reprint): 15-19; and Sharpe, 'The Late Antique Passion of St Alban', 35.

[103] E.A. Thompson, 'Gildas and the History of Britain'. *Britannia*, Volume 10. (1979): 208.

[104] Sharpe, 'The Late Antique Passion of St Alban', 31.

It is probable that Gildas probably had access to a now lost, *Passio Sancti Albani* which may have even been written in the sub-Roman period.[105] There were most likely several versions of this late Roman *Passio*; and it probably formed the basis for Bede's eighth century account of the martyrdom of St Alban, in addition to Gildas' *De Excidio.* Bede's description of the martyrdom contains accurate geographical details — he mentions the stream between the town walls and the arena where Alban was executed. Levison and Meyer propose that Bede's account was taken from a third version of the *Passio*, because of its similarities with the revised *Vita Germani* (which is the most likely way in which Constantius used the *Passio*). Bede tells of miracles that were performed in his day, and the foundation of a church dedicated to the saint at the site.[106] It is one of the strongest pieces of evidence for continuous occupation of the site of the abbey, and provides the most material for twelfth- and thirteenth-century revisions of the account of the martyrdom. Bede is also the first person to mention the martyrdom at the location of St Albans.

An Old English Life of Alban based on Bede's account was composed by a monk of Cerne Abbas, Ælfric the Grammarian, before 1005.[107] There are also several other references to Alban in Anglo-Saxon calendars and martyrologies, which demonstrate that the observance of the cult of Alban was beginning to be recognised outside the local area. As the composition and distribution of Latin *Vitae* throughout Europe in the proceeding centuries had established the connecting Alban with the town site; the monastic community of St Albans began to capitalise on an association with the martyr by emphasising a connection with the town's Roman past. Historical accounts of the martyrdom of St Alban seem to become increasingly embellished the further they were removed from the early source material, and it is possible that the increased descriptiveness of historical compositions at St Albans was the result of 'distance' from the Roman physical remains as they were slowly demolished. The embellishment would have been further influenced by historical certainty becoming clouded by the passage of time, and, as we shall see, the need for the abbey to create versions of its past in the following generations.

We must turn to archaeological evidence to understand the development of the town from the fifth to the eighth centuries, but this is often sparse. A Saxon cemetery on the King Harry lane site (to the south of the south/Silchester gate) has been dated to c 650[108]; and the latest evidence for the Saxon royal burgh of 'Kingsbury' mentioned by Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century

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[105] This text was most likely composed on the continent (Meyer proposes Auxerre as the place of composition), because of the creation of the cult of St Germanus or in the cause of anti-Pelagianism in the sixth century. Sharpe, 'The Late Antique Passion of St Alban', 35-37.

[106] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I. 7.

[107] Crick, *Charters of St Albans*. Oxford, 10.

[108] Niblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns,* 190.

suggests that it occupied a site within the Roman walls.[109] There have also been Anglo-Saxon burials discovered across the river at Holywell Hill, and at several other sites on the roads out of the town. It appears that there was continuous worship of the cult of Saint Alban at the town since the fifth century and possibly earlier.[110] There is, as Biddle and others have shown a strong argument that continuous or almost continuous Christian presence centred on or near the site of Alban's burial, and that the origins of the Saxon monastery of St Albans lay in this community, with rapid growth in the tenth century.[111] In the Anglo-Saxon period, the history of the town was relatively unknown until the foundation or reformation of the monastery by the Mercian King, Offa in 793.[112] By this stage, hagiographies of the sub-Roman martyr, Alban, had spread to a wide audience across Europe.

While there has been an abbey at St Albans since the foundation by Offa, the archaeological record remains unclear about where this was. The latest research suggests that it was on or around the site of the current abbey, where a corridor and attached building have been excavated on the south side of the present church.[113] These structures date from the tenth century, following the revival of the monastery by late Anglo-Saxon abbots, and the presence of Anglo-Saxon burials around the church suggest a monastic setting which is confirmed by textual evidence in literary sources. The immediate pre-Conquest period saw a rapid expansion in the monastic holdings of St Albans, following the translation of the saint's relics by Offa, and the exemption from paying Rome scot, which Matthew Paris recorded in his thirteenth-century account.[114] By the late tenth century, the monastery allegedly owned two large swathes of land "50 hides to the south west of St Albans and a cluster of lands in Buckinghamshire".[115] The *Gesta*

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[109] This has been the subject of contentious debate over the last 150 years, with most evidence springing from Paris' accounts of the topography of the Anglo-Saxon town. The archaeological evidence does not support the theory that Kingsbury lay across the river directly north of Verulamium and Isobel Thompson's excellent analysis of all the evidence demonstrates that it most likely lay within the confines of the Roman city. (David Thorold, Keeper of Archaeology at Verulamium museum, confirmed the strength of this theory in personal communication).

[110] Crick. 'Introduction', 1.

[111] Martin Biddle, 'Alban' In *St Albans Cathedral and Abbey*, (London: Scala published by the fraternity of the Friends of St Albans Abbey to celebrate their 60th Anniversary, 2008).

[112] There are small amounts of textual evidence gleaned from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but it must be treated with caution as this period saw the appropriation and fabrication of the histories of many Anglo-Saxon religious houses. Historians have identified that by the tenth century refoundation by Abbot Ælfric, St Albans "laid claim to estates plausibly identifiable as the remnants of an earlier endowment". Crick. 'Introduction', 15. This indicates the likelihood of royal involvement by Offa, who may have simply patronised reformation at the monastery rather than founded the house. Frere, 'Verulamium', 31.

[113] Biddle, 'Alban'. Biddle's earlier speculation on the whereabouts of the Anglo-Saxon church suggest that it was either situated in the present position of the sanctuary, in the east end of the church, or that the altar lay under the crossing tower and extended into the current nave.

[114] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 5.

[115] Crick. 'Introduction', 15.

Abbatum of Matthew Paris, composed in the early thirteenth century, records a succession of abbots at St Albans from Offa's foundation to the tenth century when Abbot Ælfric came to the house and instituted significant reform and land acquisitions. Following him were two Anglo-Saxon abbots relevant to this topic, Ealdred and Eadmer, who undertook significant excavations and salvaging of building material from the Roman site for use in the construction of a new monastic church (for a summary of textual sources at St Albans, please see Table 2 at the end of this introductory section).

Following the Norman Conquest, Abbot Paul of Caen commenced the construction of a new Norman abbey on the hill above the Roman town in the style of larger continental churches. Paul probably originated from Pavia, like his uncle Lanfranc, despite Matthew Paris' claims that he was a Norman.[116] However, Lanfranc would have introduced Norman monastic customs at St Albans, as he contributed significant endowments to the community and paid substantially for the rebuilding of the abbey. The Norman Abbey was built on an east-west alignment on the north side of the Ver, with the monastic buildings on the slope down towards the river. Paul was also responsible for adding several new estates to monastic holdings and set aside money for a new library.[117] The medieval town of St Albans grew up around the Abbey, and the modern town centre of St Albans now sits spread to the north of the Abbey precinct, with the suburbs of St Albans covering the entire area except Verulamium Park.

Hence, there has been a gradual settlement shift from the south side of Verulamium in the Iron Age, to occupation of the Roman town, then across the river in the Middle Ages to the monastic site (See Figure 1 for the relationship between Verulamium and St Albans). This seems to have been primarily dictated by the development of the monastery and the topography of the cult of Alban. Burial sites have been found at many sites around the Roman and medieval towns, generally at important religious sites or along the routes of roads, or in many cases both. Unlike most Romano-British sites, which were later replaced by medieval settlement overlaying the site, St Albans' unique topography means that there is considerable evidence remaining from the Roman town. The exposure of the Roman site is fortunate, as it is easier to identify the removal of material remains in the succeeding centuries.

The Norman abbey church was consecrated in 1115, and in 1129 the relics of St Alban were translated into a new shrine during the abbacy of Geoffrey de Gorron (abbot from 1119-1146). Over the course of the twelfth-century, St Albans rose to a position of prominence as one of the foremost religious houses in England. This was largely in part privileges by Adrian IV from

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[116] Christopher Brooke. 'St Albans, the great abbey', in *Cathedral and city: St Albans ancient and modern,* edited by Robert Runcie, (Great Britain: Martyn Associates, 1977), 45. Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 51.

[117] Crick. 'Introduction', 34.

1122-1181.[118] There were also significant privileges granted to the monastery by Pope Clement III throughout the twelfth-century.[119] St Albans also took advantage of changed royal circumstances and secured the patronage and support of the early Norman kings. The twelfth-century also saw high value artistic metalwork and sculpture produced at the abbey,[120] and the monastery won several legal and jurisdictional disputes with other houses around the country in this time. Under Abbot Simon (1167-1183) literary production at St Albans flourished and the first Norman hagiographies describing the Roman town in detail were composed at St Albans. At the height of its power in the twelfth century, the monastery boasted 100 monks, and was a stopping point for royal entourages and other important guests making their way out of London along Watling Street.

Matthew Paris' texts may have drawn inspiration from several earlier twelfth-century Latin texts already in circulation which refer to St Alban and St Albans in passing. William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (completed 1125), and Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* (composed 1123-1130) both mention the translation of Alban's remains by Offa and the building of the monastic church in the eighth century, and Henry of Huntingdon styles Alban as protomartyr of the English and the Britons.[121] This is a considerable inflation of St Alban's status, which can possibly be attributed to the use of a lost *Passio*. Henry stated himself that he drew from material kept at the Abbey, and as a lost *Passio* probably existed, that may have been copied and greatly embellished by the monastic community at St Albans in the late-Saxon period. Geoffrey of Monmouth records an account of the martyrdom of Alban in the *Historia Regum Britanniae* (completed c1136), and through the mistranslation of 'amphibalus' (cloak) which was passed to Alban during his escape from the townsfolk, created a name for Alban's companion and spiritual guide. It was most likely Geoffrey's account which inspired the 'discovery' of Amphibalus' remains by the St Albans community at Redbourne in 1177. The prevalence of accounts of the martyrdom in major twelfth-century Latin chronicles demonstrates the adoption of the Alban legend into the Anglo-Norman consciousness; and allowed for the later insular traditions featuring detailed description of the Roman town.

Accounts of the martyrdom composed at St Albans appear in the late twelfth-century, with the composition of the *Vita Sancti Albani* by William of St Albans. This trend of composition was the result of claims to legitimacy by the monastery as they asserted St Albans as a principal

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[118] Crick. 'Introduction', 34-5.

[119] See Appendix C, 'The privileges of Pope Clement III to the Abbey of St Albans' from MS Cotton Nero D i, fols 157-158. *Gesta Abbatum*, 498.

[120] Crick. 'Introduction', 34.

[121] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum,* ix.2, 624.

religious house in England following the Norman Conquest. The composition of a multitude of hagiographical texts centred on Alban's life throughout the long twelfth-century, and many of these texts reveal a medieval 'culture of re-use' of Roman British artefacts and material remains which will be seen in greater detail throughout this chapter. This 'culture of re-use' in texts, coupled with the preoccupation with the Roman and Anglo-Saxon past witnessed in the medieval building program at St Albans, suggests that a general culture of 'remembering' existed at the monastery. References to Roman material remains in texts, and their physical re-use may not have been a direct result of claims to power by the monastery; they may simply reflect a form of interest in the past, or perhaps these texts and buildings were used for edification, conveying an association with physical remains to legitimate a moral agenda; to the monks of St Albans, as well as competing monastic houses and wider twelfth-century audiences.

In the mid-thirteenth century, Matthew Paris acted as the monastery's official chronicler. He utilised the works of earlier St Albans monks, such as William of St Albans, Adam the Cellarer and Roger of Wendover — who in turn, had drawn upon early Christian sources such as Gildas and Bede.[122] It was under Paris that most of the monastery's charters were re-copied, and there are a variety of different surviving texts composed by Paris on the monastery's history and the life of St Alban which can primarily be found in what became known as The Book of St Albans, located in Trinity College, Dublin (TCD MS 177). Paris was St Albans' most prolific and pre-eminent historiographer in this period, and importantly, he promoted the production of texts containing references to Roman Verulamium and the re-use and appropriation of Roman material remains by the monastic community. Paris' compositions were the culmination of a rich insular tradition which documented the political and ecclesiastical history of the abbey of St Albans. Roman remains became a large part of this discourse.

Primary source material from St Albans reveals the importance of the martyrdom of St Alban to the history and identity of the abbey, and also illuminates the processes and extent of medieval excavations at the Roman town. The chronicles, poems and hagiographical texts produced in the long twelfth-century tell us about the physical surroundings of Roman and medieval St Albans, and a detailed exploration of these accounts allows us to understand how twelfth- and thirteenth-century monastic authors perceived and used Roman material culture for their own ends. When this is combined with evidence from the archaeological and architectural record, it reveals an intense and long-standing interest in Roman remains by the medieval patrons and audiences who used these buildings and texts. From the late eleventh century to the mid thirteenth century, St Albans underwent a period of massive expansion in its physical surroundings as well as its literary production. Paul of Caen, the monastery's first post-Conquest

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[122] Richard Vaughan. *Matthew Paris*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 21.

abbot, was a major driver behind the translation and re-use of Roman material remains at the site of St Albans, and it is clear that the monastery as whole re-appropriated aspects of its Roman history for its own benefit. This chapter will closely examine material and literary mediums of production in order to understand the process of reusing and recycling the Roman past at St Albans. It will explore how 'rebuilding' functioned in conjunction with 'rewriting' as an overarching process of cultural appropriation of Roman Verulamium during the long twelfth-century.

Table 1: Timeline of events at St Albans

43 AD	First Roman military settlement at the site following the invasion of Claudius.
50AD	Verulamium converted to a civilian settlement and awarded *municipium* status.
60AD	Boudiccan revolt and destruction of the first Roman Verulamium.
79AD	Roman town of Verulamium rededicated in the presence of Agricola.
22nd June, 208-209	First proposed date of the martyrdom of St Alban.[123]
3rd and 4th centuries	Increasingly prosperous Roman settlement with a population of 15,000-20,000.
429	Constantius tells us that Bishop Germanus of Auxerre gave thanks to St Alban after the defeat of the Pelagian heresy.
C540	Gildas composes his account of the martyrdom based on a lost *Passio Sancti Albani.*
6th century	Near abandonment of the Roman town site, and the cult of Alban localised to St Albans.
8th century	Bede composes a more detailed account of the martyrdom of St Alban.
793	Traditional date for the foundation of the Benedictine monastery at St Albans by Offa II, King of Mercia (presumably near the site of the current abbey), and the translation of Alban's relics to the monastic site.
948	Abbot Ulsinus builds the three churches of St Michael, St Peter and St Stephen, and the chapel of St Mary Magdalene.
10th century	Abbot Ælfric acquires and drains the King's fishpool at St Albans. Abbot Ealdred and Eadmer undertake a series of improvements in the town, excavations at the Roman site and begin stockpiling stonework for use in a new church.
1066	Norman conquest of England.
1077	Abbot Paul of Caen (the first Anglo-Norman Abbot) begins to build the Norman Abbey.
1088	The majority of the Norman abbey is complete.
28th December 1115	Dedication of St Albans Abbey in the presence of Henry I.
12th century	Monastic community secured papal privileges exempting it from various fiscal obligations.
1st August 1129	Remains of Alban translated into a new shrine in the Norman abbey.
1167-1183	William of St Albans composed the Anglo-Norman *Vita Sancti Albani.*
1237-1259	Matthew Paris was the abbey's official historiographer, and composed several texts on the life of Alban and the history of the monastery.

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[123] J. Morris, 'The Date of St Alban', 3.

Table 2: St Albans textual sources

Author	Title	Date	Brief description
Constantius of Lyon	*De Vita Germani*	480	St Germanus' visit to the shrine of St Alban following the dispersal of the Pelagian heresy in 429.
Gildas	*De Excidio Brittonum*	C540	Short account of the martyrdom of St Alban, along with Aaron and Julius.
Bede	*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*	8th C	Slightly longer account of the martyrdom with some geographical details of Verulamium.
William of St Albans	*Passio Sancti Albani*	1167-1183	Preface features an anonymous post-Roman Briton who read the Passion of Alban from an inscription off a wall in the Roman town.
Ralph of Dunstable	*Vita metrica sancti Albani*	Late 12th C	A metrical version of William of St Albans' Latin *Vita Sancti Albani*
Roger of Wendover	*Flores Historiarum*	1236	Formed the first part of Matthew Paris' *Chronica Majora*. Nocturnal journey of Robert the Mercer with the shade of St Alban in the streets of Verulamium. A description of purgatory which features a Roman style amphitheatre.
Matthew Paris	*Chronica Majora*	1236-1259	In addition to Wendover's text, illustrations of the construction of the Anglo-Saxon church, showing medieval building practices.
Matthew Paris	*La Vie de Seint Auban*	C1230-1240	Passion of Alban written in Anglo-Norman French, features descriptions of the Roman town of Verulamium.
Matthew Paris	*Liber Additamentorum*	1236-1259	Inventory text which contains descriptions and pictures of the jewels of St Albans, featuring a Roman cameo.
Matthew Paris	*Gesta Abbatum*	1259	The excavations of Ealdred and Eadmer, the salvaging of Roman stone and construction of the abbey by Paul of Caen, descriptions of the abbey.

3.2 The re-use of Roman material culture in the textual and archaeological record

Verulamium, the Roman town of St Albans, was one of the most important civilian towns of Roman Britain, and left an enduring impact on the landscape of St Albans well into the medieval period. The colony was granted the rank of *municipium* in c. 50 AD, and was used to settle veterans of the Roman army whose citizenship entailed fewer rights that the inhabitants of a *colonia*. It was situated on the junction of Watling Street, a major Roman road which led from London to Chester, and Akeman Street, which led to Gloucester and South Wales. The town was not significantly developed prior to the Boudiccan revolt, but began to be built in stone during the Neronian period (54-68AD). During this time, the central forum and basilica complex was constructed, covering a total 2,000m2. This complex consisted of a colonnaded courtyard with a hall and law courts at one end, and a temple or senate house at the other, and was dedicated to the emperor Agricola in 79 A.D.[124] The forum and basilica were rebuilt from the ground up in the second century AD; and the height of the building can be projected to 28 metres at a conservative estimate.[125] The forum and basilica buildings were designed as imposing and prestigious monuments, and they would have remained visible well into the medieval period. (See Figure 2 for a plan of the forum/basilica complex, including the location of St Michael's church; and 3.2 for a more detailed analysis of St Michael's and the Roman basilica).

To the north of the forum there was a large *macellum* or market hall with nine shops on each side of a piped water supply, and a defensive bank and ditch were also built surrounding the town in the mid-first century AD.[126] In 140 CE a wooden theatre was constructed on the west side of the town, and this was renovated extensively in the third century in relation to a cult site at the Folly Lane burial area outside the town walls.[127]. Five Romano-Celtic temples have been excavated at Verulamium, and another large temple occupied a triangular block at the diversion of Watling Street near the London Gate, with a bath complex next door.[128] A devastating fire around 155-160, destroyed many properties in the town, but the town was rebuilt in even greater splendour in the third century. During the third and fourth centuries, the town contained seven temples, a *macella*, forum, aqueduct, basilica, theatre, two bath complexes, two monumental

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[124] This was dated after the reconstruction of the dedication inscription found in the St Michael's school yard in 1955. Niblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns*, 68-9, 76.

[125] Frere. *Verulamium Excavations*, 67.

[126] Niblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns*, 19.

[127] For a more information on this important Roman area of St Albans, see R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler. *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, (Oxford: Society for Antiquaries, 1936), 128.

[128] In total, seven Roman temples have been discovered at St Albans, with several more buildings being likely candidates for early Romano-christian temples Niblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns*, 78; This area was extensively excavated by the Wheelers. R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities,* 113.

arches and city walls all constructed out of flint and brick.[129] In addition, the town had numerous lavish private houses with extensive added wings (mostly built during later centuries as the town grew more prosperous), and many more remain to be excavated.[130] These houses form some of the most impressive buildings from the Roman period, and establish Verulamium as a prominent and wealthy town in the Romano-British landscape.

The Roman walls from the third century provide the most striking remains of Verulamium still visible today. They range for 3.6 kilometres and were at least 4 metres high, and their construction would have required extensive manpower and building material. At foundation level, the walls are nearly 2.5 metres thick, and where remains survive below ground, it shows that the walls were carefully faced with flint, with levelling courses of tile about every 1m (see Figures 3-6 for images of the remaining sections of wall and gates). Both the London and Chester gates were solidly built, with entrances for vehicles and pedestrians flanked by two large towers (Figure 7). The length of wall which faced the approach from London sported protruding bastions and towers, designed primarily to impress those who arrived from the capital, and it was also backed by a similarly prominent earthwork bank.[131] The decorative flint and tile banding on the outer face of the wall may have been the model from which tile banding in the later Norman Abbey drew inspiration (see 3.3.2).

The wall would have required about 66,000 tons of flint, and a corresponding amount of mortar and brick tiles. We cannot fully know what building materials were used at Verulamium, due to extensive robbing in later centuries. However, due to a lack of good quality building stone available in the Essex area, flint provided the majority of building stone, and large flat terracotta tiles, known as *tegulae* were also manufactured for building purposes. These tiles were manufactured in the Hertfordshire area and judging from the amount that survives in re-used contexts, undoubtedly accounted for much of Verulamium's building material.[132] Production of *tegulae* ceased after the decline of Verulamium and did not resume until the fifteenth century.[133]

[129] Thorold proposed that the means of salvaging brick might have indicated that Roman buildings were constructed out of brick more often than flint -- i.e. if buildings were simply smashed down in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, then the bricks might have been destroyed if they were in an opus mixtum composition. However, due to the hardness of the brick, it was probably possible to demolish walls of brick and flint and still able to salvage the bricks in equal measure (personal communication).

[130] Niblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns*, 86-87.

[131] These projecting towers and neat wall coursing may have been intended in much the same way that the impressive multangular towers at York faced the approach from the *colonia* across the Ouse Bridge. Niblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns*, 68-9, 123.

[132] While we cannot fully know the extent to which bricks were used in the town, we do know that a very large amount were re-used in the abbey suggesting that most of the masonry buildings in Verulamiun had at least some amount of brick in them.

[133] Eileen Roberts, 'The Abbey fabric' in *The Hill of the martyr: An architectural history of St Albans.* (Dunstable, Bedfordshire: The Book Castle, 1993), 6.

Production was aided greatly by the local geography, which privides chalk and clay of various compositions. Indeed, the area immediately around St Albans features high quality clay that is ideal for brick production). The other major component of building material at St Albans, flint, was mined in Hertfordshire from chalky soil in stratified deposits; the best and largest coming from the bed or lowest layer of these deposits.[134] There is some evidence for timber buildings at the site, with occasional preserved beams, postholes and timber outlines in places.[135] In the first century at Verulamium, most of the buildings apart from the temple and forum would have been built of timber[136].

In the second and third centuries as the town grew more prosperous, larger houses, bath complexes and the theatre were rebuilt in flint and brick tile. Their ubiquity can be seen from a general survey of excavation photos,[137] where flint and brick are used in conjunction in the foundations of buildings. In the construction of *insulae* the composition tended to favour flint, but this may be in part because foundations required flint more than brick, and we have no evidence for these walls above ground. The foundations of larger masonry walls, such as the town walls, sometimes have relieving arches of brick built into them to help support the weight of the wall.[138] In places where the houses survive at a great depth, portions of the walls survive and these contain considerable amounts of brick, especially in quoins.[139] The brick and flint which comprised the buildings of Roman Verulamium became the major source of building material in St Albans for centuries to come, and would shape the way in which later medieval people perceived and emulated the building practices of the Romans. This process also took a literary form, as Roman remains became the inspiration for descriptions of the town in twelfth-century texts.

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[134] Roberts, 'The Abbey fabric', 6.

[135] Due to the decomposition of wooden archaeological remains, it is difficult to ascertain the extent of wooden buildings at Verulamium. However, given the size of the town, and the slow pace of masonry building, there would have been extensive timber building for a considerable part of the town's history. Frere discusses the popularity of sleeper beam construction for over a century prior to the dedication of the town and mentions that the use of masonry in the walls of domestic buildings was rare before 140 AD. Frere. *Verulamium Excavations*, 9-10.

[136] Frere. *Verulamium Excavations*, 10.

[137] Frere. *Verulamium Excavations*, 1983, plates II – XLVI; and R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler. *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, plates LXXXII – CXIII.

[138] R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler. *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, plate XCIX.

[139] Frere explains that though domestic buildings started to be rebuilt using stone during the second century, these continued to be generally half timbered throughout this century. These buildings are commonly a mixture of plaster covered wattle and daub on a timber frame, interspersed with flint and brick. Often the outer or important walls were solid masonry with the timber framed wattle and daub used for partitions. Frere. *Verulamium Excavations*, 10; R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler. *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities,* 94.

A tradition of literary re-use, comprising descriptions of Roman remains or re-use in chronicle, poem or hagiography, became pervasive in monastic writing of twelfth-century St Albans. Several of the texts composed at St Albans even situate their narratives within an imagined late-Roman landscape, and in William of St Alban's *Vita Sancti Albani*, the monumental ruined walls of the Roman city formed a crucial part of the text's setting, and lent credence to its validity. This text was possibly written between 1167-1183, to commemorate the *inventio* of St Amphibalus and the translation of his remains from the nearby town of Redbourne into St Albans abbey in 1178.[140] This Latin *Vita* was significantly longer than any previous text on St Alban, as William promoted St Amphibalus as an additional martyr and companion to St Alban.[141] This text formed the narrative outline for most of the Latin lives found in later medieval collections, and was the most-read text on St Alban outside the monastic community.[142]

Ralph of Dunstable, William's teacher, later translated William's *Vita* into Latin elegiac couplets in the late twelfth-century at William's request.[143] The relevant part of the passion for this study lies in its multi-layered narrative preface. Having been asked to compose the *Vita* by Abbot Simon, William commenced the work with a dedication to him, and then details the discovery of a "book written in the English language and containing the Passion of the blessed martyr Alban",[144] which Simon had commanded him to translate into Latin. This passage evokes Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'very ancient book' and perhaps became the model for the discovery of another of the 'old book' in the ruins of Verulamium, mentioned by Paris in the later *Gesta Abbatum*.[145] It is highly unlikely that such a book existed at St Albans, and may instead have been a literary device intended to lend authority to William's story.

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[140] Monika Otter. *Inventiones: Fictionality and Referentiality*, 45. James G. Clark, 'The St Albans monks and the Cult of St Alban: the Late Medieval Texts', in *Alban and St Albans: Roman and Medieval Architecture, Art, and Archaeology* edited by Martin Henig and Phillip Linley, (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 2001), 218; O'Donnell and Lamont support this theory saying the growth of the cult of St Amphibalus in the late twelfth century resulted in the composition of several hagiographical texts centred on his life. Thomas O'Donnell. 'Introduction to the Passion of Saint Alban' (with Margaret Lamont) in *The Life of Saint Alban by Matthew Paris*, translated and edited by Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 134.

[141] Clark, 'The St Albans monks and the Cult of St Alban: the Late Medieval Texts', 218.

[142] Clark, 'The St Albans monks and the Cult of St Alban: the Late Medieval Texts', 218.

[143] Thelma S Fenster, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne. *The Life of Saint Alban by Matthew Paris*, translated and edited by Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 135; W. McLeod, 'Alban and Amphibal: Some Extant Lives and a Lost Life' *Mediaeval Studies* Volume 42 (1980): 412-416.

[144] William of St Albans, *Vita Sancti Albani*, translated by Thomas O'Donnell and Margaret Lamont, *The Life of Saint Alban by Matthew Paris*, translated and edited by Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 139.

[145] O'Donnell. 'Introduction to the Passion of Saint Alban', 134.

The second part of William's preface, as he claims, was actually taken from the preface of the ancient book given to him by Simon. This stated that "The former citizens of Verulamium, in order to make known their hearts' exaltation at the suffering of blessed Alban, left behind engravings on their city walls".[146] These were ruinous and decaying by the time the anonymous author of the ancient book discovered them, but they recalled "how the holy man's prayer brought forth a spring on the mountaintop, so that with its beneficial waters he could relieve his enemies, who had been tortured by thirst and were despairing of life".[147] The anonymous author also describes how he saw "the crumbled battlements, heavy with age, under whose walks the blessed Alban suffered painful bodily torments" and "saw the place where the unvanquished martyr long ago endured death for Christ's sake filled thick with trees".[148] Hence the anonymous Briton, most likely a fictive creation of William, tells us that he literally read the account of St Alban of the ruined walls of Verulamium.

This section of the preface evokes a sense of loss after the passing of Roman civilisation in Britain, as it was supposedly framed within the pre-conversion period,[149] but the anonymous Briton also predicts the return of Christianity. The language used is strongly based in geographical and physical description, and the crumbling battlements and fading inscriptions show the text's engagement with literary topoi of ruins and lost civilisations. This was emblematic of Roman civilisation, and grounds the text in wider twelfth-century memorial traditions of *spolia* or re-use. Unless twelfth-century Verulamium was in a similar state to that recorded in the preface, then William was interested in, and capable of imagining the town's physical past. While the use of local landmarks is common in hagiographies, William's use of Verulamium's ruins is far more sophisticated than previous texts because they are not simply the backdrop for his narrative. Rather, they form the medium by which his account is transmitted.[150] As the introductory section to William's text, the foregrounding of material remains in the preface demonstrates the importance of the physical past to William's interests. He showed the antiquity of the site derived from its Roman past, and used it to authorise his own narrative for the advancement and glorification of St Albans.

The anonymous author exists in a time and space interjected between Alban and William's time, and Monika Otter has argued that elements of physicality and memory in the preface

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[146] William of St Albans, *Vita Sancti Albani*, 139.

[147] William of St Albans, *Vita Sancti Albani*, 140.

[148] William of St Albans, *Vita Sancti Albani*, 140.

[149] The anonymous author does not name himself for fear of persecution as a Christian, but he lives significantly later than the martyrdom, "longo post tempore" and recalls the time of the martyrs with partiality.

[150] Otter. *Inventiones: Fictionality and Referentiality*, 47.

describe how "real" topographical features are used for authentication.[151] If William has his fictional narrator recount details of the landscape accurately, then he is a trustworthy source for the rest of the contents of the *Passio* and the validity of the primacy of the monastery could be acknowledged from a hagiographical viewpoint. William's temporal positioning of the narrator means that the narrator's authority is tied to the physicality of the town. He "is the last person to be able literally to read history in the ancient ruins and in the local landscape".[152] Twelfth-century monastic claims to legitimacy often featured justifications of property possession, so the passage demonstrates a fictional re-interpretation of Roman carvings or inscriptions set within the city walls to suit twelfth-century monastic ambitions. Hence William depicts the past and present physical landscape of his monastic house, using material remains and topographical description to commemorate the *translatio* of Amphibalus in the twelfth-century. The monumental buildings of the Roman town, in particular its colossal walls, were 're-used' by this late twelfth-century author in his textual descriptions, demonstrating how Roman material remains could be appropriated across a variety of media.

Unlike William of St Albans' work, the thirteenth century *Vie de Seint Auban,* written in Anglo-Norman French, contains several references to the physical features of medieval St Albans within the main body of the text. Composed by Matthew Paris sometime between 1230 and 1250; this Life of Alban and Amphibalus draws heavily upon William of St Albans' *Passio*, but omits William's preface. The text came to Paris via Ralph of Dunstable's late twelfth-century revision, but it is likely that Paris used William of St Albans' text directly as well. [153] Early in the text, Paris sets the scene at Verulamium, describing it as an "imperial town" where:

> "Amphibalus came upon a palace of stone, that seemed no mean shelter, with upper rooms, stories, and great cellars below, and the lord, sitting at the entrance to his house, a noble citizen in magnificent attire, with a robe of beaten gold and enamel clasps. His name was Alban, a high official of the city. No one was better known or more open-handed: his ancestors were Roman in origin."[154]

This passage contains several literary representations of Roman material culture, demonstrating how the physical landscape could inform and help construct a medieval understanding of the Romano-British past. In the Middle Ages, the term 'palace' was often a motif

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[151] Otter. *Inventiones: Fictionality and Referentiality*, 48.

[152] Otter. *Inventiones: Fictionality and Referentiality*, 48.

[153] Matthew Paris, 'Vie de Seint Auban'. in *The Life of Saint Alban*, translated and edited by Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 19.

[154] Mathew Paris*, Vie de Seint Auban*, 131.

to describe stone ruins, seen in other texts such as Gerald of Wales' description of the ruins of Caerleon: "You can still see many vestiges of its one-time splendour. There are immense palaces, which, with the gilded gables of their roofs, once rivaled the magnificence of ancient Rome."[155] Presented with an unidentifiable, but possibly mainly intact series of stone buildings or even ruinous foundations of monumental scale, the potential conclusion for these medieval authors was that it might have served a function as a palatial residence. The added detail of "upper rooms, stories, and great cellars below" suggests that Paris might have viewed the ruins at the site, perhaps with the kind of barrel vaulting that reminded him of medieval monastic cellars. It certainly brings to mind some of his accounts of archaeological excavation of the Roman ruins the *Gesta Abbatum,* which will be discussed later in the chapter. Matthew Paris, like Gerald of Wales, may have extrapolated from things he had personally witnessed at the site of Verulamium, or he may have replicated an existing medieval literary trope of the Roman palace. Either way, this passage shows that Paris demonstrates a marked interest not just in the antiquity of the town but particularly in its material presence and character.

In Paris' account, Alban is depicted as a medieval lord, yet he is also clothed in beaten gold and enamel reminiscent of classical descriptions of Roman imperial opulence. His Roman ancestry marks him as just and open handed, a common descriptive technique witnessed in medieval descriptions of lordship or kingship, but Gransden argues that these descriptive elements in medieval writing were themselves taken from classical models such as Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars.*[156] In this passage there is clearly a blurring of medieval personal descriptions and their classical counterparts which can be seen in many instances of historical writing in the twelfth-century, whereby authors conflated different versions of what they perceived as a 'collective past'. Medieval authors adopted stylistic descriptions from different historical periods- Biblical, Classical, and in this case, from Bede and earlier twelfth-century texts. Paris' subject was ascribed Roman rhetoric and given Roman characteristics, but this was not necessarily truly representative of a person from Classical Rome[157] Alban instead is a medieval re-imagining of a late classical figure, and this can be seen in various aspects of his bearing, manner and dress. Rome at St Albans in the twelfth- and thirteenth-centuries was not simply a place of ruins; it was also a place of lively secular cultural fantasies about Roman historical figures, which interacted with notions of medieval sanctity in literary texts.

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[155] Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Cambriae (The journey through Wales and The description of Wales)* translated with an introduction by Lewis Thorpe, (New York: Penguin, 1978), Book I, Chapter V, 115.

[156] Gransden, 'Realistic observation in Twelfth-Century England', 29.

[157] R.N. Swanson. 'Past, Present and Future: legacies, imports, memories'. *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 58 for the conflation of Roman and medieval subjects.

Alban's behaviour also invokes the Roman physical past, and large parts of Paris' account, like William of St Albans', were influenced by the Roman physical setting of the narrative. When St Alban spoke with Amphibalus during his secret conversion, "He took him aside and went with him to a building outside the city walls where they would not be seen or heard by neighbours or guards".[158] Paris inferred from the existing ruins that the walls had once stood to a significant height, and visualised their appearance and effect from an experiential perspective. When the townsfolk returned once more to St Albans "They were near Verulamium and could already see the walls, turrets, and battlements of their temples and palaces".[159] This interaction with physical space and Roman buildings in the narrative shows the prominence of Roman remains in medieval writing at St Albans. Like William of St Albans, Matthew Paris employed a form of 'conscious antiquarianism' when thinking about the physical remains of his abbey's history, in order to flesh out the miracles of his patrons saint and lend credibility to the claims of the monastery.

The *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris also contains references to the physical Roman landscape in a dream visitation to a local mercer, Robert, by St Alban in 1177. In this account, Alban wakes Robert in the night in order to guide him through the city and point out landmarks in the local landscape from Alban's own time:

> "Obiter colloquetabantur, ut solet amicus cum amico co-itinerante, tum de moeniis dirutae civitatis, tum de amne diminuto, tum de strata comuni ajacente civitate".[160]

> [On the way they conversed, like two friends travelling together, now about the walls of the destroyed city, now about the river that had shrunk so much in size, now about the public street that passed by the city.][161]

This passage is found in the part of the *Chronica Majora* which owes its composition to Roger of Wendover, a monk at St Albans who died in 1236, 23 years before Matthew.[162] Up to 1236, the content of the *Chronica Majora* is lifted almost verbatim from the earlier chronicle of Wendover's *Flores Historiarum*[163], to which Paris most likely had access. This episode reveals

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[158] Mathew Paris, *Vie de Seint Auban*, 133.

[159] Thelma S Fenster, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne. *The Life of Saint Alban by Matthew Paris*, translated and edited by Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, French of England Translation Series 2. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010, 183.

[160] Roger of Wendover, *Liber qui dicitur Flores Historiarum: the Flowers of History from the year of our Lord 1154 and the first year of Henry the second, King of the English edited by Henry G Hewlett.* New York: Kraus reprint of 1886 Rolls series edition (volume I), 1965, 109-111.

[161] Monika Otter, *Inventiones: Fictionality and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing*. Chapel Hill and London. The University of North Carolina Press. 1996.

[162] Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 21.

[163] Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 24.

another twelfth-century historian who displayed considerable interest in the physical surrounds of the town. It is possible that Roger used an earlier 'St Albans compilation' as a model for his text, and this has been the subject of much debate since Madden, Hardy and Luard discussed the actual origins of the St Albans historiographical school.[164] However, there are clearly elements from the martyrdom accounts of Gildas and Bede, when Wendover describes the river as considerably smaller in current times compared to the early Christian period.[165] Wendover's account of the twelfth-century mercer's nocturnal journey with the saint is a creative and original way of representing the town's physical past, through its original named inhabitant. Alban takes Robert to the grave of Amphibalus and points it out to him, so that Robert can inform Abbot Simon of its whereabouts, in order for the remains to be re-interred. Roger's account was written after the discovery of Amphibalus' remains, and Monika Otter states, "The saint casually authenticates his own legend [and that of Amphibalus, which is the point of the passage] by tying it to land-marks familiar to thirteenth century readers, by laying it out on the map of their immediate vicinity."[166]

Hence Roger's account is inherently tied to the *inventio* and *translatio* of the relics of St Amphibalus, and he used the actual physical landscape as well as an imagined Roman landscape in order to justify the claims of the monastery in the late twelfth-century. At a time when the remains of Amphibalus had just been 'discovered' by the monastery, St Albans needed as many accounts as possibly of the martyrdom which included Amphibalus to attract pilgrims and compete with the hagiographical claims of other monasteries. Not only did Wendover describe elements of the Roman landscape derived from the now-ruined buildings in their prime, he instituted a form of historical creativity in order to demonstrate how they altered over the years. It was these differences which lent the most weight to the account. Otter explains that "references to landscape and topographical features serve a double purpose, they tie the narrative to outside reality and, via that outside reality, to a higher level of reality, a sacred meaning that is available for all physical reality if one knows how to read it".[167] The effectiveness of this account of St Alban, with the saint travelling through the town and pointing out changes to the landscape before

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[164] This proposed compilation might have been written by Abbot John de Cella, and Hardy suggested that it was composed by Walter of St Albans. Vaughan asserts that it is not possible to rule out an earlier text, but there is no current supporting evidence to establish the existence of this. Thus the earliest we can trace this passage is to the imagination of Roger of Wendover. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 23, 24. For the subsequent palaeographical analysis of the text to determine its origins, see the discussion of Powicke and Galbraith's theories in Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 22-24. Clearly there is a tradition of re-use of textual accounts related to material remains at St Albans, and in cases such as this, can be traced through several layers of transmission spanning more than 500 years.

[165] This theme was in turn taken up by Paris in the *Gesta Abbatum* in his description of the shells discovered during the excavations of Eadmer, that were left behind when the river receded during the martyrdom.

[166] Otter, *Inventiones: Fictionality and Referentiality*, 50.

[167] Otter, *Inventiones: Fictionality and Referentiality*, 50.

coming upon the relics of St Amphibalus, is inherently tied to the physicality of his description. Wendover found original ways to use the landscape of the town, in an established St Albans tradition of realistic observation combined with creativity. He created a retrospective account of the saints, which validated the strength of St Albans' hagiographical claims.

3.2.1 Stone robbing at Verulamium and later Anglo-Norman textual description

The previous descriptions of the Roman remains at Verulamium demonstrate the sheer size and quantity of buildings that once stood at the site, making it among the largest Roman towns in Britain by the end of the second century.[168] However, it is now apparent, upon visiting Verulamium Park, where the remains of the Roman town lie, that very little of what had been the Roman town now survives above ground. Clearly, stone robbing occurred so extensively at this site so as to reduce buildings to below ground level, or at least low enough to be covered by later deposits of soil. The considerable foundations of the forum, theatre, temples and multiple houses have had to be uncovered and excavated in order to understand the full extent of the town. The only part of Roman Verulamium which was visible prior to modern excavation were sections of the walls (Figures 3-6), remnants of the Silchester gate,[169] and during droughts, parched lines in the grass showing the lines of the Roman streets, which had already been dug up and used for road metalling from the sixteenth century. Currently, the only standing, unexcavated Roman masonry is a section of the wall near the south east corner of the town, and the isolated "St Germain's Block" (Figure 6), indicating that virtually the entire Roman site was robbed for building material and during the early and High Middle Ages.

It is a problematic exercise to date the removal of material from Verulamium. This lies both in the difficulty in comprehending a process which removes traces of itself, and because there has been little stratigraphic study of surrounding soil to determine whether any loose finds date the removal of stonework. However, there are certain sections of the wall which indicate that they may have been robbed specifically for material, rather than left to fall apart. St Germain's block appears to have been demolished uniformly down to modern ground level in one section, but is left relatively intact in the part next to this (see Figure 6). In another part of St Germain's block, there is a hole in a section of wall (Figure 8), which appears to have been robbed specifically for flint, possibly for repairs, as it is a small amount. Figure 9 shows the robbing of a brick course through the thickness of a section of city wall discovered during the excavations of Mortimer Wheeler, where the post-Roman stone robbers dug down below ground level in order

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[168] Niblett, *Verulamium: the Roman city of St. Albans.* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), 73.

[169] As recorded by Stukely. Parts of the Silchester gate were visible in 1700, and sections of the walls still remain standing. Niblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns*, 45.

to remove a whole course of tiles.[170] Like St Germain's block, it is unknown when this salvaging took place, but it was also seeking a particular building material, in this case, brick tile. These small examples of specific salvaging, coupled with the large-scale recycling at the Norman abbey, and literary accounts, tell us that material recycling certainly took place at St Albans. Two instances of mass stone robbing are likely to have occurred in the Anglo-Saxon and early Norman period, based on literary evidence.

Matthew Paris' early thirteenth century *Gesta Abbatum* describes two ninth-century abbots, Ealdred and Eadmer, who excavated Roman Verulamium during their abbacies at St Albans. Paris' account describes the ancient remains of Verulamium, which contained streets with underground channels, and skilled waterways carried on arches: "vias cum meatibus sub terraneis, etiam solide per artificium arcuatis".[171] Abbot Ealdred preserved some of the stones and roof tiles which were attached to buildings in the area, for use in a new church. [172] The next part of the passage references Paris' account of St Alban, by using archaeological exploration of the site before 979 as a way of providing evidence for his hagiography: "Historia de Sancto Albano explanat evidentur".[173] When Ealdred excavated material remains of shells, Paris claims that is was left after the recession of the river during the martyrdom, and they had been crushed under the feet of the townspeople as they crossed. Paris states that the townspeople had named local sites after this incident "Oistrehulle, Selleford, Ancrepol … Fishpol" [174](Oyster Hill, Shellford, Anchor-pool and Fish-pool).

Paris wrote that Abbot Eadmer, the following abbot, continued this excavation to ensure that there was adequate construction material for a new church of St Albans. In a 'great palace' in the middle of the ancient city of Verulamium, he describes the discovery of a cache of texts in a space in the foundations of a building. Paris' description of this building brings to mind the forum and basilica area which may have stood in the centre of the Roman town well into the high Middle Ages (see section on St Michael's below). This discovery includes a selection of ancient books and rolls discovered "as if in a small book chest", featuring a history of St Albans along with some other books relating to Phoebus and Woden, whom Matthew explains, is Old English Mercury. This passage may build upon the tradition of the "ancient book" mentioned in the preface of the earlier *Vita Sancti Albani* by William of St Albans as well as Geoffrey of Monmouth. The

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[170] R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, 53.

[171] Matthew Paris, (Walsingham, Thomas). *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani. (*New York: Kraus reprint of 1867-69 Rolls series edition, volume III, 1965), 24.

[172] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum,* 24.

[173] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum,* 25.

[174] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum,* 5.

Peterborough Chronicle also mentions a chest of old documents found in the ruins of the church which had been ruined by Vikings. This well-known device was obviously in consistent literary usage, but demonstrates that many chroniclers shared William's fascination with Roman or antique remains.

Literary production at St Albans often refers back to existing texts produced at the abbey, and hagiographical traditions are repeatedly strengthened by reference to materiality and the physical environment of these other texts collated by Matthew Paris. Upon discovering the 'ancient book' in the remains of Verulamium, the abbot has an old priest, 'Unwonna' translate the book from old British, into Latin, whereupon it crumbles into dust.[175] Twelfth-century claims concerning the legitimacy of sources often derived authority from a sense of age, which may be the case here. The cache of books hidden within the ancient remains demonstrates a fascination with the ruins at the Roman town, and also Paris' creativity in engaging with ruins in order to propose that it harboured artefacts, such as this book, in a state of advanced decay. When he mentions the "Old English Mercury" in this passage, Paris relates a member of the classical gods, but has to explain that this figure was transposed through to twelfth-century audiences through the Anglo-Saxon version of the god as Woden. This shows a highly sophisticated engagement with both the Roman and Anglo-Saxon pantheons, and demonstrates that the monks at St Albans could relate, and participate, in pagan theistic traditions.

Eadmer continued the work of his predecessor and unearthed a wide variety of physical material at the site. Matthew Paris' description of the remains in the rest of the passage on Eadmer's abbacy is quite unique, paralleled perhaps only by Gerald of Wales' late-twelfth-century description of Caerleon.[176] Paris writes that:

"Tabulatus lapideos, cum tegulis et columnis....fossores in fundamentis veteram a edificorum, et concavitabus subterraneis, urceos et amphoras, opere fictili et tornatili decentor compositos; vasa quoque vitrea"[177]

["the city was floored of stone, with roof tiles and columns....The diggers found in the foundation of the ancient building, underground cavities, jugs and amphorae, works of clay beautifully wrought and pleasingly regular; likewise vessels of glass".][178]

When we consider that Paris' description of the portable Roman remains was made at least two hundred years after their supposed discovery, it becomes remarkable, not only in its detail, but

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[175] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum,* 26-27.

[176] Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Cambriae,* Book I, Chapter V.

[177] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 27-28.

[178] My translation.

also in Paris' speculation of how this excavation process may have occurred; he made several judgements about the placement of artefacts and the purpose of underground cavities. One could easily imagine that amphorae and broken pieces of ceramic tile and glass were objects that would be excavated from a Roman drain, making a very strong case for Paris' eyewitness engagement with a cache such as this one in his own time. The collection of reassembled amphorae and other storage jars in the Verulamium museum (see Figure 10), demonstrates that these materials would have been recoverable by excavation during the ninth century, or the thirteenth.

In the *Gesta Abbatum*, prior to Eadmer's death, he had the remains of the *antiqui cives Verolamii* destroyed,[179] ending the exploration and salvaging from the buildings in Verulamium which had spanned two abbacies. Paris' inclusion of this episode may relate to the need to 'surpass' or 'conquer' existing Roman remains, as a statement of superiority over England's past. The import of these passages should not be lost on those who investigate material culture in the Middle Ages, because they not only feature a description of the ruins of a Roman town and an imagined excavation which was supposed to have taken place several hundred years earlier, they show the cultural setting in which these actions could be envisaged. Paris' literary creativity is supplemented by his, previous chroniclers, and previous abbots', traditions of engagement with their physical Roman surroundings. The Roman past at Verulamium was clearly of paramount importance to the Norman monastery. The monks of St Albans emphasised their special connection to Roman remains and these in turn were used both physically, and as the metaphorical setting for literary narratives.

3.2.2 The Roman theatre: in the landscape and the medieval imagination

The theatre at Verulamium is one of the only Roman theatres identified in Britain,[180] and it became a prominent monument in later medieval writing. It lay outside the western Roman gate, near a monumental arch on the route to Chester, and was possibly part of a complex religious precinct (see Figures 10 and 11). The theatre was almost entirely covered by an accumulation of soil until re-discovered in the modern period in 1847 by a local antiquarian, and then excavated 1933.[181] It was first constructed around 150 AD, and differed from the standard model of Roman theatres in that it was built with a large round lower stage area, or *orchestra*, which more closely resembled an amphitheatre. The adoption of this form means that the theatre may have had a

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[179] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum* , 28.

[180] R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, 123.

[181] Kathleen Kenyon, ' The Roman Theatre at Verulamium, St. Albans', *Archaeologia,* lxxxiv, (1934): 213-61.

gladiatorial or religious function.[182] The *orchestra* was surrounded by tiered banks which held timber seating areas known as the *cavea*, which was supported at the front and the back by brick and flint walls of identical design to the city walls (Figure 12). After some minor renovations, the theatre fell into considerable disrepair in the third century, and underwent large-scale rebuilding and extension at the end of this century. The stage was extended significantly into the orchestra, and the back wall was rebuilt which increased the diameter of the theatre from 46 to 58 metres.[183] An excavated column has been re-erected in its original position next to the stage, demonstrating the approximate height of the walls. The Roman theatre would have been an impressive building which dominated the extramural area to the west of the Roman town and probably remained visible into the Norman period.

Several literary references suggest that the remains of the Roman theatre were prominent, at least in part, in the Middle Ages, and these references also demonstrate that the Roman theatre informed medieval perceptions of the ruined town. During the course of Ealdred's excavations in Matthew Paris' *Gesta Abbatum*, the abbot "filled in a very deep hollow, which was surrounded by a mound on all sides and contained an underground cave".[184] Paris claims that this cave was the home of a dragon. In later part of the text, Abbot Ealdred ordered parts of the site of Verulamium to be blocked up and filled in, because he claimed it held a cave which was a refuge to criminals and fugitives who had fled from a nearby forest "Fossata vero civitates, et quasdam speluncas, ad quas, quasi ad refugia redeuntes, malefici et fugutivi a densis silvis vicinis fugerunt".[185] This description of the ruins of Verulamium may well suggest how the Roman theatre area may have looked after eight centuries- with soil deposits over the mound-like *cavea* leading down to a deep depression in the orchestra. Indeed, the final stage of the theatre's Roman history consisted of its use as a rubbish dump, with a brownish deposit containing "potsherds, food bones, and other debris" followed above by a black layer of mingled ash, which completely covered the orchestra and stage.[186] As the Roman ground levels were already obscured by the end of the fourth century[187] further build-up might have accumulated over the course of the next few centuries.

The cave mentioned in the account might have been a space under the concrete flooring of the stage, and stone robbing of the ninth and eleventh centuries might have removed large

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[182] R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities,* 73-74.

[183] R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, 128.

[184] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 25.

[185] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum,* 24.

[186] R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, 129.

[187] This deposit contains coins mostly of the fourth century and has been dated from 379 - c400. R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, 129.

amounts of exposed masonry down to the level of the banks. While Paris does not explicitly describe the theatre in association with its Roman heritage, the ruins of the theatre within the landscape of the ancient town provided the setting for the description of the salvage process, and highlighting the place that such ruins may have held in the medieval imagination. Paris associates the remains of the theatre with unsavoury inhabitants by the late-Saxon period, telling us that the abbots filled in this space during their reclamation of building material for the church. The theatre may have been perceived as a liminal space connected with fantastical beings with an apparent antiquity evident from its ruinous state, in contrast to the abbots' righteous efforts to recover masonry for use in the church. This contrast may have been included to add literary interest, as well as to draw support for the works of God carried out by the abbots.

Roger of Wendover's description of purgatory in the thirteenth century *Flores Historiarum* may also be related to the ruins of the theatre at Verulamium. It commences with a description of a purgatorial fire between two walls with a large space in the middle, then a lake with a bridge leading to a mount with a great church on top.[188] This description roughly matches the topography of St Albans in much the same way that early accounts of the martyrdom did. Continuing, Roger describes a space near here where "there was a large and dark looking house surrounded by old walls and in it there were a great many lanes filled around with innumerable iron seats... All around this court were black iron walls and near those walls were other seats, in which the devils sat in a circle as if at a pleasant spectacle".[189] He goes on, "Now at the entrance of this detestable scene was a wall five feet high, from which could plainly be seen whatever was done in that place of punishment." It is highly likely that this description of a hellish viewing circle relates to the theatre of St Albans.[190] While there is nothing in the description of purgatory which explicitly links it to the theatre at Verulamium, Wendover probably used his surroundings at St Albans as a model for his writings, and his interest in the buildings and state of repair of his purgatory evoke a sense of collective Norman 'imagining' witnessed in other contemporaneous descriptions of ruins, such as the roughly contemporaneous *Descriptio Cambriae* of Gerald of Wales.

Roger's account of the sports of the devils also brings to mind a description of typical pursuits from an arena. They "dragged sinners from their seats and tortured them in front of all the spectators in a diabolical parody of gladiatorial games."[191] Theatres such as the one at St Albans were used primarily for religious purposes and theatrical entertainment, and

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[188] Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, Vol. 2, 223.

[189] Roger of Wendover *Flores Historiarum*, 227.

[190] Roberts, *The hill of the martyr: an architectural history of St. Albans Abbey*, 36.

[191] Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum,* 227-228.

amphitheatres in Britain, if present, tended to be reserved for the demonstration of military techniques. However, Wendover may have been familiar with classical descriptions of the gladiatorial sports of the Roman Empire, and may have speculated that, in a different context, the theatre could be used for these pursuits (this confuses the functions of amphitheatre and theatre, a distinction with which Wendover may not have been familiar). In this description, the spectre of hell as an amphitheatre was as much about watching the punishment of others, as it was in Ancient Rome. Isidore of Seville's encyclopaedic definition of the theatre or amphitheatre entails a structure designed expressly for viewing, where the audience standing above may contemplate the players and backgrounds.[192] In this case, the account of purgatory evokes a fearsome architectural space housing a scene of Christian punishment presided over by 'devils in iron seats'.

Roger's description was not necessarily an innovative tradition in the high medieval period, as manuscript illustrations and other descriptions of hell or purgatory as an amphitheatre prevail in existing Anglo-Saxon traditions.[193] However, Roger clearly builds on these traditions, and most interestingly, he does so from probably first-hand experience of this architectural form at Verulamium. Mary Carruthers argues that the architectural form of the Roman theatre was sometimes used as a place of memory and mnemonic recollection of sin in medieval literature.[194] She explores the way Dante encountered the amphitheatre in the topography of hell as circular, tiered, and ruinous. This functioned as a physical clue, allowing him to use the image of the theatre as a 'memorial idea' to construct a sense of morality through a vision of eternal punishment.[195] Wendover tapped into a well-developed medieval idea, by using the theatre as a setting for hell. The Roman theatre and amphitheatre did not always elicit such reactions, but his description would have been particularly effective, as the presence of the ruined Roman theatre at St Albans would have cemented this idea in the minds of the monks and visitors to the town. Paris and Wendover's descriptions of the Roman remains, therefore, not only evoke a vision of the Roman past, but were also used as a memorial device for moral edification.

3.2.3 The legacy of Roman remains in re-use in parish churches

Moving on to a further example of religious uses of Roman remains in the twelfth-century, the parish churches of St Albans also made extensive use of Roman building material, retain important topographical sites and emulate Roman decorative techniques. St Michael's, St

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[192] Carruthers, 'The Poet as Master Builder': 883.

[193] Sarah Semple, "Illustrations of Damnation in Late Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts," *Anglo-Saxon England* Volume 32 (2003): 231-45.

[194] Carruthers, 'The Poet as Master Builder': 882-884.

[195] Carruthers, 'The Poet as Master Builder': 883.

Stephen's and St Peter's were recorded by Matthew Paris as being established by Abbot Ulsinus in 948, along major routes into the town.[196] Areas near St Michael's were excavated several times in the early twentieth century by William Page and Charles Bicknell, showing that it was built over the structure of the Roman headquarters, or *principia.* Excavations showed that this massive building had two stages of building in the latter part of the second century A.D.[197] This means there are significant foundations below St Michael's, from two complexes, and at least one of these would have survived above ground as a monumental structure in the post-Roman period (see Figure 2). The inner walls of the forum and basilica would have been destroyed when St Michael's parish church was constructed in the tenth century, but the fact that St Michael's rests entirely within the line of the Roman basilica's outer walls may indicate that the basilica was not demolished to make way for the later church, and may have been standing to some height at the time of building. A similar situation exists at Wroxeter, where the basilica remained in use until the middle of the sixth century, and there are numerous other examples of Anglo-Saxon rulers re-using Roman administrative buildings which still survived as standing structures.[198]

The demolition of the forum and basilica would have required considerable effort, because, as Raymond Howell points out, many Roman constructions were very well built, and would not necessarily have fallen down on their own.[199] This suggests that the central public buildings of the Roman settlement at Verulamium may have been visible well into the late-Saxon period, and dictated the choice of site for St Michael's. St Michael's was founded in 948, only 30 years before the first phase of salvaging during the abbacy of Ealdred. The early church of St Michael would have been built out of wood, and then rebuilt in re-used Roman masonry by c 1000 AD.[200] The current church, built out of re-used Roman brick and flint, partially retains its Anglo-Saxon fabric. The monastic community may have been inspired by this re-use of Roman material, precipitating the second phase of large scale salvaging that was undertaken in the later eleventh century to gather material for the new abbey. The chronology and conditions of the construction of St Michael's church provides the first surviving example of salvaging at St Albans, and it

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[196] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 22.

[197] The forum/temple complex was excavated by Gilbert Scott in 1865/6, by Charles Bicknell and William Page in 1895-1915; and again by Mortimer Wheeler and Mrs Cotton in 1949.

[198] Leslie Webster, 'Anglo-Saxon England 400-1100, *Archaeology in Britain since 1945: New Directions*. edited by Ian Longworth and John Cherry (London: British Museum Press, 1986), 43.

[199] Unlike the tetrapylon at Caerleon, the St Albans basilica was not undermined, but simply dismantled at ground level leaving the foundations intact. See Raymond Howell, 'The Demolition of the Roman Tetrapylon at Caerleon: An erasure of memory?' *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, Volume 19, Number 4, (2000): 387-395.

[200] Chris Saunders, 'Excavations in the forum at Verulamium 1979'. *Hertfordshire Archaeology,* Volume 8 (1981), 202-205.

indicates that the re-use of Roman building material had already begun to acquire cultural significance in the pre-Norman period.

St Michael's occupies the abandoned central Roman forum and basilica site within the ruins of Verulamium, in a similar manner to many other early-foundation churches in England. Winchester and Canterbury both had ecclesiastical sites within the forum areas during the early medieval period. Chester, and Caerleon (and possibly York) also all had Saxon churches built over (or in) the *principia* or headquarters building, which was the equivalent central area for Roman military sites. At Gloucester and Lincoln, the cathedrals were built close to this central area, within the confines of the Roman wall. Notably, there do not seem to be many continental examples of this phenomenon, with the cathedral church of Strasbourg being the only church built over the central *principia* area of the military site.[201]

This suggests that English towns are peculiar for their occupation of the main central site in a Roman town so that "the Roman legacy came to be buried deeply beneath centuries of accumulated construction."[202] Roman remains became the bedrock upon which these urban centres rested; their historicity and longevity was defined by this occupation. This may in part be due to the religious nature of this site in Roman towns, with the *principia* housing the statue of the cult of the emperor. This does not explain why English sites were occupied more that their continental counterparts, as European Roman towns also possessed *principia*. The only explanation I can offer relates to sparser post-Roman settlement in England, with these monuments retaining their architectural importance within urban landscapes later into the medieval period. The sheer size of central public buildings would have created a lasting monumental legacy with which later generations wanted to associate themselves.

The other parish churches at St Albans, namely St Stephen's and St Peter's, are both constructed over extramural Roman cemetery sites on the routes out of the town, with St Stephen's on the route heading east towards London, and St Peter's located on the road which heads north along Watling Street. St Stephen's contains foundations from the original pre-Conquest church as well as a twelfth-century renovation. It was built in a form almost identical to St Michael's,[203] complete with recycled Roman material.[204] It has similar bonding courses within the flint walls, which indicates that it too drew upon this Roman decorative tradition, and may

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[201] Thomas H. Watkins, 'Roman Legionary Fortresses and the Cities of Modern Europe', *Military Affairs*, Volume 47, Number 1 (1983): 15-25.

[202] Watkins, 'Roman Legionary Fortresses and the Cities of Modern Europe': 22.

[203] Nibblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns,* 298-99.

[204] Terrence Paul Smith. 'Early re-cycling: the Anglo-Saxon and Norman re-use of Roman bricks with special reference to Hertfordshire', *Alban and St Albans: Roman and medieval architecture, art and archaeology*, (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 2001), 114.

also have been inspiration for those wishing to salvage material from the Roman town in the Norman period. St Peter's church was most likely built along the same plan as St Michael's, but was rebuilt by the thirteenth century, renovated in the fifteenth century, and again in the early nineteenth century, so there is no surviving material from the original church. However Chris Saunders' projection of the plan of St Michael's and St Stephen's corresponds to the area of the nave of St Peter's, suggesting that it was contemporaneous and of a similar style to the other late-Saxon churches.[205] These sites follow a regular pattern of initial use for post-Roman burial with the eventual construction of Saxon churches. Extramural burial sites are among the most common topographical feature in the siting of continental churches and often relate to burial of early Christian martyrs outside the city walls during the Roman period. We see this settlement pattern at Bonn, Cologne and in Rome itself.[206]

The abbey church of St Albans conforms entirely to this schema, as the site of the current abbey church on Holywell Hill may have been in use, if not occupation, since the third century. Several periods of burial are present, including late Roman, early Anglo-Saxon, late Anglo-Saxon (which correspond with the abbey foundation in the tenth century) and high medieval grave sites.[207] The monastic grounds correspond with topographical descriptions of the place of martyrdom of St Alban, across a stream from the Roman town and up a hill. This topographical correlation would not have been lost on the medieval populace at St Albans, and would have strengthened their belief that their church was built over the actual burial site of the saint. This site had been important since the Roman period, and demonstrates how essential physical sites in the landscape were to the perpetuation of the Alban myth and the construction of the abbey's distinct sense of its own history.

Although the re-use of various sites in Roman towns is well documented across Europe, St Alban was the only proto-Roman saint in England, meaning that St Albans is the only place where an early Christian shrine site dictated the location of its major medieval church. Additionally, St Albans does not make full use of Roman Verulamium as the location for the later medieval town. The central Roman buildings, while occupied by the later parish church of St Michael's, failed to attract the attention of any concentrated settlement in the Norman period. This clearly shows that the unique religious traditions at St Albans took primacy over the re-use of secular Roman sites.

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[205] Nibblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns,* 189.

[206] Watkins, 'Roman Legionary Fortresses and the Cities of Modern Europe': 15-25.

[207] Nibblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns,* 250-252.

3.3 Re-use in the Norman abbey

Having examined re-use in the smaller parochial churches of St Albans, we must now turn to the large monastic church at St Albans, in which a variety of re-use practices took place. Many of the instances of re-use in the church of St Alban were deliberate and meaningful, reinforcing the culture of interest in the Norman past which has already been witnessed in textual accounts produced at the abbey. The abbey church currently comprises of large structure designed according to Romanesque architectural traditions, and largely comprising of a Romanesque ground plan. The Romanesque east end of St Albans abbey does not survive; instead it was replaced in the mid-thirteenth century following an earthquake which damaged the Romanesque apsidal chapels. In the fourteenth century, the south wall of the nave was also replaced. In the nineteenth century, extensive renovations were made to the entire building, culminating in the remodelling of the west front which were carried out by Lord Grimthorpe.[208] Despite these additions, the Norman abbey of St Albans is one of the finest examples of English Romanesque architecture surviving relatively intact to this day.

Unlike any other major monastic church in England from the late eleventh-century, it was built almost entirely from re-used Roman building material. This material was salvaged from Roman Verulamium, and is present in almost all parts of the foundations, nave, presbytery, transepts and crossing tower of the abbey (see Figure 14 for surviving parts of the Norman architecture). Roman re-use at St Albans demonstrates the desire of the Anglo-Saxon abbots to create a new building out of the Roman ruins, and the tenacity of the Norman abbots to plan and execute such an unprecedented grand design which utilised so much of the Roman past. We know nothing of the Anglo-Saxon abbey, but it may too have been constructed from salvaged Roman building material, demonstrating that the Roman past formed a large part of the architectural legacy at St Albans. The abbey church combines aspects of Romanesque architecture and the Anglo-Saxon past which serves to emphasise the importance of building in a way which reflects aspects of the Roman remains at Verulamium. Despite several renovations over the last 900 years, the majority of the Norman fabric of the abbey church still survives and allows us to see the processes of Norman re-use first hand.

St Albans abbey was built in a Romanesque cruciform plan, with the length of the nave measuring 134 metres, and the full extent of the transepts, 56 metres.[209] The church was divided into three sections, with the choir extending partially into the large nave, and the sanctuary and relics of Alban at the east end behind the choir. There were two aisles which flank the nave, with

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[208] Nibblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns,* 221-232.

[209] J.C. Buckler and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 9.

thirteen bays in each. A considerable part of the Norman nave survives, with three pillars on the south side and thirteen on the north side, coupled with long sections of the walls (see Figure 15). The elevation in the abbey consists of three storeys, with triforium and clerestory sitting above the arcade of the nave. Many of the original Romanesque windows still survive and these are especially visible in the north transept (see Figure 16). The walls in the nave and the tower gradually decrease in thickness with each level, presumably to reduce the weight of the masonry.[210] The walls of the Abbey were most likely plastered inside and out, although the external plaster has now almost completely fallen away.

St Albans abbey incorporates aspects of Romanesque design, including rounded arches in the nave and crossing tower, Romanesque proportions, heavy set piers, comparatively small windows and relatively austere interior decoration. While not a great deal survives of the interior decoration of the abbey or surrounding buildings from the twelfth-century, excavations surrounding the church have uncovered highly decorated pieces of stonework constructed out of Purbeck marble and limestone in Romanesque and early Gothic styles (this can be seen on the south exterior of the nave and in smaller pieces in Figures 17 and 18). These include pieces of arch, a chevron capital, and parts of a shrine.[211] These capitals, baluster shafts and columns were carved both out of re-used and also freshly quarried stone, and were probably part of the extensive renovations that were carried out on the abbey and surrounding monastic buildings throughout the twelfth-century.[212] Some of these may have come from Robert De Gorham's chapter house, excavated in 1978 by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle. The chapter house was built 1151-1156 out of reused stone and brick, and would have had highly decorative pieces of carved late Romanesque stonework.[213]

The moulded decoration in the church is fairly austere; in keeping with early Norman Romanesque style it features only small amounts of sculpture and decorative stonework. Like many Romanesque churches, the Abbey of St Albans was probably richly painted, and some of these paintings still survive on the nave pillars and in the sanctuary (see Figure 19). An important aspect of the Norman abbey which no longer survives were the double apsidal chapels which

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[210] J.C. Buckler and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban* , 38.

[211] See Malcolm Thurlby, 'The place of St Alban in regional sculpture and architecture' in *Alban and St Albans: Roman and medieval architecture, art and archaeology*, (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 2001), 162-175.

[212] Tim Tatton-Brown, 'The medieval building stones of St Albans abbey: A provisional note', in *Alban and St Albans: Roman and medieval architecture, art and archaeology*. (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 2001), 120.

[213] Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle, 'England's premier abbey. The medieval chapter house of St Albans and its excavation in 1978', *Hertfordshire Past,* Volume 11, (1981): 17.

would have protruded from the east sides of the transepts (see diagram of abbey, figure 14).[214] The east end of the church also terminated in a large apse, and had exactly the same proportions as the east end of the cathedral at Peterborough.[215] The apse was a definitive feature of Romanesque buildings in both England and continental Europe; combined with other architectural features of the abbey it demonstrates how continental Romanesque style was integrated with re-used Roman material culture. The use of flint was particularly easy to create rounded architectural shapes such as an apse, so re-use in this case would have had a highly functional purpose.

The tower stands over the crossing, measuring 9 x 10 metres in width and 44 metres in height.[216] It is the only eleventh century church with a large crossing tower still standing in England.[217] The tower is a lantern design, with the triforium occupied by arcaded arches with baluster columns, topped by relatively large windows in the clerestory. The enclosed belfry above the clerestory has a Norman timber floor, and is roofed by another set of Norman timbers (Figure 20). Several scholars propose that the tower and its corner turrets were topped by pyramidal and conical spires respectively in accordance with Romanesque tradition, but the renovations to the top of the tower have removed their original state.[218] The tower owes its longevity partly to the fact that the walls were built sloping slightly inwards, with each stage recessed into the one below.[219] The tower itself incorporates several aspects of standard Romanesque design with its rounded arches, double baluster shafts, conical towers and simple triangulated decoration (see Figure 21), and was built almost exclusively out of Roman bricks. These bricks would have been a prominent part of the building regardless of the plaster which may have covered them. The external walls of the tower also have several elements of Romanesque decorative style. The triangular design in the belfry window arches is a common feature of late-Saxon and Norman Romanesque style, which have been carefully built using the bricks. The re-use of Roman building material was therefore incorporated into contemporary building styles, showing that Norman architects created a careful decorative scheme where both Roman building material and Norman style could be used in conjunction. This leads to a more careful discussion about the re-use of building material in the abbey.

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[214] J.C. Buckler and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 44.

[215] J.C. Buckler and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 45.

[216] J.C. Buckler and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 40.

[217] Eileen Roberts. 'The crossing tower and transepts', *The hill of the martyr: an architectural history of St. Albans Abbey*, (Dunstable: Book Castle, 1993), 45.

[218] J.C. Buckler and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban* , 122; and Roberts. 'The crossing tower and transepts', 55.

[219] J.C. Buckler and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 119.

3.3.1 The re-use of Roman building material

The first mention that we have of the stone hoarded by Ealdred and Eadmer being used is during the Abbacy of Paul of Caen.[220] Paul was the first Norman Abbot installed at St Albans in the post-Conquest period from 1077-93, and was closely related to Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury by blood; Paris notes that "some people" claim that Paul was Lanfranc's son. According to Paris's *Gesta Abbatum*, Paul undertook the rebuilding of the abbey:

> "ex lapidibus et tegulas veteris civitatis Verolamii , et materiae lignea, quam invenit a praedicessoribus suis collectam et reservam"[221]

> [out of the stones and roof tiles of the ancient city of Verulamium, and wooden material, that he found, amassed and saved by his predecessors.][222]

It had been over 200 years since the majority of the stone was excavated from the Roman town, yet the Norman builders were completely aware they were using recycled material, and this knowledge was passed down until Matthew Paris was writing in the thirteenth century, possibly via oral transmission. The Norman builders who undertook extra salvaging in the late-twelfth-century would have also seen parallels between material already stored by the Anglo-Saxon abbots and the new material they were bringing from Verulamium in the late eleventh century. Knowledge of the Roman town is reinforced by continued use of the name 'Verolamium' down to the thirteenth century, when Paris composed his account. Literary accounts of the stone robbing at Verulamium use the term '*lapis, lapidis*' (stone), making no distinction between conventional types of building limestone and the flints that form the majority of stonework in the abbey. Roman buildings, especially in towns, provided a potential source of ceramic and flint building materials for Anglo-Saxon and Norman builders throughout much of England. However, this potential seems to have been exploited to its fullest only in regions lacking good quality building stone.[223] Hence, Hertfordshire, and St Albans in particular, had a tradition of salvaging brick because of lack of stone resources, and this tradition may have affected the way in which these building materials were described.

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[220] Martin Biddle proposes that the abbey was built in two stages, with the east end and the tower and transepts built between 1077-1088, leaving the then standing original monastic church in the current area of the nave. Once this first building phase was complete, the Anglo-Saxon abbey was pulled down and the nave was constructed, leaving the entire church to be consecrated in 1115. This theory explains the 27 year gap between the date of the written record of completion and the consecration; and has parallels with Winchester cathedral's building sequence. Biddle. 'Alban', 41.

[221] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum* , 3-54.

[222] Own translation.

[223] Smith, 'Early re-cycling: the Anglo-Saxon and Norman re-use of Roman bricks', 111.

To date, scholarship on St Albans has not investigated where the Roman masonry salvaged by Eadmer and Ealdred was kept between the ninth and eleventh centuries. An exploration of this lacuna would possibly reveal information about the size of the Anglo-Saxon church or churches, and perhaps the layout of the monastic complex, now completely destroyed above ground level. There is no archaeological evidence which sheds light on this problem; but the strained relationship between the abbey and the town throughout the Anglo-Saxon and Norman period may have meant that it was kept on monastic property. Descriptions of a part of the town known as Kingsbury in the *Gesta Abbatum* assert that its only residents were 'robbers and thieves'.[224] It is not known exactly which area around St Albans Kingsbury was, but the descriptions of its residents are incongruous with Paris' accounts of the town as a 'royal burgh'.

During the abbacies of Leofstan (c1050) and Robert (c1153) petitions were made to the king for the destruction of the town,[225] and various encroachments upon Kingsbury's rights took place, including the purchase of the King's Fishpool by the abbey in c970.[226] The abbey set up a rival monastic town during the abbacy of Wulsinus (c950), and obtained a royal charter allowing them to salvage stone from Verulamium. This rivalry between abbey and King's burgh would suggest that the stonework was kept in the monastic complex, possibly in the lower end of the monastic grounds inside the boundary wall. This area remained relatively clear during the medieval period, and remains so to this day, with little excavation having been carried out in the monastic grounds. It is also the closest point to Verulamium, which sits just across the river. In 1020 Leofric sold off some of the building material to raise money for the poor.[227] which suggests that it was valuable even as a loose resource.

The masonry in the abbey was comprised primarily of Roman brick tiles and un-knapped flints with small amounts of limestone. Most of this was originally produced or mined in the Roman period, and then salvaged in the medieval period. In both the Roman remains and the abbey, the flint was used in the walls un-knapped or laid with their glassy side facing outwards, in courses interspersed with courses of brick.[228] At the abbey, a lime mortar held the courses together and was intended to be plastered externally and internally and then whitewashed. A fragment of this plaster survives externally in the cock-loft over the north nave aisle.[229] The walls of the nave and transepts are primarily of the brick/flint rubble construction mentioned above;

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[224] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 24.

[225] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 38, 122.

[226] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 23.

[227] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 29.

[228] Roberts, 'The Abbey fabric', 6.

[229] Roberts, 'The crossing tower and transepts', 54.

but they also contain, according to Tim Tatton-Brown's analysis of the stone composition of the building, boulders of Hertfordshire puddingstone and Totternhoe stone and some quite large blocks of Barnack limestone.[230]

Hence there is a small amount of stonework in the abbey which is not flint, creating a mixture of building materials known as *opus mixtum* (see Figure 22).[231] These stones may have been added in the construction of the abbey, and not sourced from the Roman remains. Paris tells us in the *Gesta Abbatum* that Eadmer "found and kept aside ancient stone slabs",[232] and this is supported by the existence of larger blocks of building stone in the fabric of the abbey (see Figures 23 and 24).[233] Monumental buildings excavated at Verulamium currently lack larger blocks of stone, indicating that these were all robbed in the medieval period for re-use in the abbey fabric, or burnt to produce lime mortar for the building of the abbey.[234] Considering the scarcity of limestone in the area, the function of limestone in mortar production may well have depleted the supply of larger blocks for the abbey.

Terrence Paul Smith outlines three types of re-use of bricks at St Albans abbey: completely casual re-use, whereby bricks were placed haphazardly in Norman walling; moderately casual re-use, where the bricks were selected for specific structural purposes (David Stocker would call this functional re-use); or the construction of walls wholly of re-used brick.[235] Smith's definition does not attach motives or meaning to the actions of the builders. Instead, his categories are aligned upon the amount of actual recognisable building material in any one part of a building. Stocker's alternative attribution of motive when defining re-use allows us to see what the builders might have intended in their re-use. If a piece of stonework was integrated into a building in the same manner or position as the building from which it was originally taken, we cannot necessarily assume that the builder was aware of this, especially in this case, because there may have been a 200 year gap between when the stone was salvaged and when it was re-used. We can only infer the significance of re-use to a builder or patron based on prominence of position, or attention drawn to it by some other means. This is why the re-use of Roman building material at St Albans

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[230] Tatton-Brown, "The medieval building stones of St Albans abbey: A provisional note", 118.

[231] Jean-Pierre Adam, *Roman building: materials and techniques* translated by Anthony Mathews. (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 140.

[232] Niblett. *Verulamium: the Roman city of St. Albans*, 8.

[233] There are traces of burning on some of the larger blocks in the Abbey which indicate that these are also from burnt Roman buildings at Verulamium because there were several fires at Verulamium over the course of its history, and stone blocks with evidence of burning have also been found at the Roman town.

[234] According to David Thorold, keeper of archaeology at the Verulamium museum, the museum only boasts a small collection of stone blocks on display and several more in the reserve collection (personal communication).

[235] Smith, "Early re-cycling: the Anglo-Saxon and Norman re-use of Roman bricks', 111.

Abbey should be considered in conjunction with literary evidence, and in this case, there are also decorative elements which inform an understanding of the meaningful re-use of Roman material culture.

3.3.2 The emulation of building and decorative techniques

At St Albans, there was a dual representation of architectural or decorative techniques. This can be seen in the very buildings of the monastery, particularly the abbey church, and it can also be seen in illustrative representation of buildings at the abbey in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Eileen Roberts suggests that Robert Mason, the Norman builder of the abbey, may have wandered among the extensive ruins at Verulamium and used them for inspiration.[236] It is possible that the Roman ruins not only provided the raw material for building the abbey, but also the techniques of building and decoration. As Paul of Caen's plans for the Norman abbey were more grandiose than anything the Saxon abbots had prepared for, more materials would have had to be gathered. As the digging for masonry proceeded, Robert or other Norman builders might have observed Roman building techniques and copied them in the abbey.[237]

The Bucklers, who conducted a thorough analysis of the abbey church in nineteenth century, claimed that several aspects of the Norman abbey imitated Roman building styles, and that the Norman building was particularly designed to suit the qualities of the re-used Roman materials.[238] Grove Lowe noted in 1855 that the mortar joints in the Roman city wall are from 1-2.5 inches thick and this is replicated in the Norman abbey, but very thin joints were used by post-Norman builders making repairs using the same building material.[239] This perhaps demonstrates that the Norman builders inspected the Roman ruins to understand how to build with coarse, unfamiliar materials. It is possible that any similarity in building style or technique is purely functional or even co-incidental, and may simply have been the most convenient or efficient way of building with these particular re-used materials, with no particular overt reference to or emulation of the building techniques of the Roman period. However, the fact that the abbey looked like the Roman buildings in Verulamium would have signalled a similarity in material and style, regardless of whether this had a practical function.

The practice of laying courses of brick alternating with walling comprised of a flint rubble core faced with knapped flint is a Roman decorative element found still visible above ground in

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[236] Roberts, 'The Abbey fabric', 36.

[237] Roberts, 'The Abbey fabric', 36.

[238] J.C. and C.A Buckler, *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 16.

[239] Niblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns*, 222.

the remains of the walls and theatre at Verulamium, and can also be seen in the Norman walls of the abbey (See Figure 3 or 25 for Roman examples; and Figure 26 for a sample from the abbey). It is a localised version of a common Roman building technique whereby a rubble core, strengthened by layers of brick which ran right through the mortar is then faced with stone.[240] There are two reasons why Norman builders might have copied this manner of building: to give strength and structural integrity to the walls of the abbey through the use of bonded layering, or as a decorative display copied from the ruins of Verulamium, or perhaps both.

At the abbey, the careful flint work rarely passed through to the insides of the walls,[241] indicating that the striation of flint facing was decorative. The brick however, in accordance with Roman building techniques, runs through the walls, suggesting that the Norman builders copied the design to provide structural integrity. This highly distinctive banding, or polychromy, can also be witnessed at many other Romano-British buildings constructed out of mixed materials in Britain. At Colchester and Caernarfon castles, Abigail Wheatley has made a very strong case for a deliberate emulation of Roman tile banding,[242] and a similar case can be made for the walls of St Albans' abbey. This banded construction technique is unmistakeably Roman,[243] and was not a feature of the English Romanesque building style. Figures 26 and 27 show the almost exact similarity in building style between visible remains at Verulamium and the abbey fabric. The adoption of the strengthening properties of this building technique may have been a practical consideration copied from the nearby site as the best way to use the flint and brick material, but it is also likely to have been a deliberate attempt to emulate the decorative aspects of Roman buildings.

It is also possible that the Norman builders, instead of taking this construction method directly from the ruins of the Roman town, may have sourced it from another part of medieval St Albans. The tenth century church of St Michael's, also incorporated tile banding as part of the construction of the walls (see Figures 27 and 28). The tile banding at St Michael's is entirely decorative because the banding is only a single tile deep and thus offers no structural support. Instead of evoking the buildings of Roman Verulamium, the builders of the Abbey may have instead been evoking the pre-Conquest building techniques at the parish church which had played an important role within the St Albans historical tradition since the time of the refoundation of

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[240] For a diagram of this building method, see Adam, *Roman building: materials and techniques,* 218, fig 510, picture C.

[241] J.C. and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 18.

[242] Wheatley, *The idea of the castle in medieval England*.

[243] Roman buildings that used this construction technique would have a rubble core, strengthened by layers of brick which ran right through the mortar and faced with stone. Adam, *Roman building: materials and techniques,* 218.

Offa. The transmission of the tile banded building style in the Norman abbey is more complex than first perceived, and may invoke the Anglo-Saxon past as well as the Roman past.

Alongside the tile banding, the abbey also feature other instance of emulation of Roman decoration. The semicircular arcades in the south transept are topped by tympana constructed of Roman *tegulae* arranged in a quasi-herringbone pattern. While the herringbone design is a standard feature in Norman architecture,[244] it can also be found as a decorative element in Anglo-Saxon as well as classical Roman buildings. Indeed, at building IV, an *insula* in Verulamium there is a herringbone brick paving made out of the same types of tile found in the south transept of the abbey.[245] While this paving would probably have been covered over following the decline of Verulamium, it is possible that this type of flooring may have been uncovered during the Anglo-Saxon or Norman excavations and copied in the abbey. It is unlikely that the herringboned areas in the south transept were plastered when first built (the plaster was only stripped off here in the nineteenth century) as this was a well-known decorative area in Romanesque buildings.[246] Thus it may have been the *act* of building in a particular style which was copied from the Roman town, rather than a specific ornamental effect intended to be viewed and understood. However, if these bricks were left exposed, then they constitute a striking part of the decoration of the Norman abbey, and draw close attention to the re-used Roman remains.

Another example of a copied Roman building technique can be seen in the foundation walls of the abbey, where flint work is sorted and laid in regular courses which can be likened to the Roman construction technique of *opus vitatum*. This is a building style whereby regular blocks are laid in regular courses, where the edge of the block is laid directly over the centre of the block below it.[247] This is another distinctly Roman style of building which can be seen all over Britain. Generally it is seen in larger walls which have a rubble core and *opus vitatum* facing, such as Hadrian's Wall and it is visible still at the site of Verulamium in the foundation of walls where the ground level has fallen away. Alongside this technique, the medieval builders of the abbey also re-used Roman flue tiles in the stairwell of the tower. The tiles were filled with mortar and used in the walls (see Figure 29 for a sample in the Verulamium museum).[248] It is most likely that these two building techniques were adopted for practical reasons, as they appear to be the most functional way of re-using the materials and do not necessarily reference their original function.

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[244] Such as in decorative masonry at Scolland's Hall at Richmond castle.

[245] R.E.M. and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium: a Belgic and two Roman cities*, plate CIII, picture A.

[246] Roberts, 'The Abbey fabric', 26.

[247] Adam. *Roman building: materials and techniques,* 139.

[248] J.C. and C.A. Buckler, *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 26. Tim Tatton-Brown notes that these flue tiles were often difficult to re-use, so their use in this manner is fairly ingenious and economical. Tatton-Brown, 'The medieval building stones of St Albans abbey: A provisional note', p 112.

However, functional and emulatory re-use can, and often did, co-exist in the same building. This implies that even when re-use was for reasons of economy or practicality, it still carried meanings to those who used the building.

The larger recycled blocks from the Roman town were often employed in the columns, capitals and bases of the windows in the circular turrets of the transepts, and the abacus mouldings of the other windows and arches. [249] The use of larger masonry blocks is another form of functional re-use, where re-cycled stonework was used in the same capacity it had been originally. The only freshly quarried stone blocks used in the abbey from the late eleventh century, were also used as long internal string courses at abacus level, and higher up in the walls of the transepts. They were used for capitals, shafts and bases including the baluster shafts in the triforium arcade on the west side of the north transept.[250] From this evidence, it is clear that the freshly quarried stone was still employed in the same manner that the Roman blocks were used – as structural mouldings and in long decorative courses. The medieval builders, even when not using Roman materials, still attempted to use newly quarried materials in the same way in an attempt at continuity and equivalence. They would have created a building design with the Roman materials that were available in mind, but did not have quite enough, resulting in the quarrying of fresh stone. This new stone needed to fit sympathetically with the design which had already been set out.

Roman re-use and the emulation of Roman decorative techniques can also be seen in manuscript images produced in texts at the town in the Norman period. Matthew Paris' illustrations demonstrate his overwhelming interest in the depiction of towns and buildings, and many of them reveal interesting perspectives on the re-use of Roman material culture. Paris created several maps of Rome, London, England, and the Holy land, as well as a *mappa mundi.* He drew birds-eye pictures of Jerusalem and Acre, and depicted countless European and English cities in his marginalia.[251] Paris' illustrations of Canterbury, Dover, Rochester and several northern Italian cities are mostly stylised or iconographic representations of the city as a castle, and on one occasion he even records collapsing buildings following an earthquake.[252] Paris' accomplishment as an illustrator can best be seen in his autograph copy of the *Chronica Majora* in the Cotton manuscript; of particular import are illustrations of the refoundation and construction of the Anglo-Saxon monastery by Offa (see Figures 30 and 31). Despite purporting to depict the

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[249] J.C. and C.A. Buckler, *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 19.

[250] Tatton-Brown, 'The medieval building stones of St Albans abbey: A provisional note', 119.

[251] For a useful, but not comprehensive, collection of Paris' illustrations, see Richard Vaughan, *The Illustrated chronicles of Matthew Paris: observations of thirteenth century life,* (Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1993).

[252] Richard Vaughan. *The Illustrated chronicles of Matthew Paris*, 53, 84.

Anglo-Saxon building program, these pictures feature building practices and techniques that one would associate with church construction in the high Middle Ages – the builders are depicted with string levels, squares, cranes and compasses. One builder is even shaping a stonework capital featuring Gothic acanthus leaf.

Most interestingly, in the same manuscript Paris' illustrations which accompany the text of his thirteenth century *Vie De Seint Auban* contain entirely Romanesque architectural features (see Figures 32 and 33). These include rounded arches, (not gothic pointed arches), cushion capitals, arcading, and quatrefoil embellishments, suggesting that Paris conflated the temporal space of his life of Alban with the re-use of Roman remains in the Norman period. His tale is historically positioned to echo the architectural style of the Norman abbey approximately a hundred years before Paris' own time. As the *Vie* is set in the late-Roman period, this may also relate to a persistent belief in the Middle Ages that Romanesque architecture was directly related to its Roman predecessor, and that the two could be interchangeable. These illustrations show the abbey constructed entirely of brickwork but the twelfth-century walls of the abbey in Paris' day were a mixture of flint and brick rubble. It seems that Paris created an imagined Anglo-Saxon church which was a conflation of the Norman Romanesque building phases of the abbey of which he had direct experience, but also an invented Anglo-Saxon phase of re-used material in a Norman style which also re-used Roman material. The illustrations not only demonstrate that Paris took artistic license and conflated architectural styles and time periods, but also communicated that the physical legacy of Offa's foundation and the tradition of re-use of Roman material culture on the site were important features in the history of the Norman monastery.

3.3.3 Portable material remains in the life of the abbey

Textual illustrations at St Albans also demonstrate the re-use of portable Roman remains at the abbey in the long twelfth century. Paris records that the tenth Abbot, Leofric, reserved certain gems which included 'camaeos' for the shrine of St Albans.[253] This is an interesting observation, because Paris also included a drawing of an onyx Roman cameo in his inventory of the treasures of St Albans – the *Liber Additamentorum* (see Figures 34 and 35).[254] This drawing is accompanied by a description of the properties of the cameo, as "almost too large to fit in the hand, of partly bluish and partly reddish colour with a grey streak across it".[255] It depicted an early Roman

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[253] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum* , 29.

[254] Matthew Paris, *Liber Additamentorum,* MS Cotton Nero Di. f 146 r.

[255] C.C Oman, 'The Jewels of St Albans Abbey',*The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Volume 57, Number 329, (1930): 82.

emperor in the guise of Asclepius and was quoted by Paris to provide "efficacy to women in childbirth", whereupon it was lent the wealthiest female patrons of the abbey.[256]

The presence of the cameo in the *Liber Additamentorum* demonstrates that not only did Paris create a history for this artefact by having it originate from the Roman ruins during the abbacy of Leofric (or he may have known about the actual collection which suggests an interest in antiquarian remains found during the Anglo-Saxon period of the abbey), but that he was also aware that jewellery fashioned as cameos were a particularly Roman design, and he may have even had proof that the cameo did indeed originate from Verulamium. Matthew Paris' treatment of the cameo is indicative of his texts as a whole: he foreshadows the existence of twelfth-century belongings of the Abbey by recounting their earlier medieval discovery. His account of Leofric's reservation of the gem, along with his description and drawing of the cameo in the *Additamentorum*, demonstrate a small, but nonetheless important, attempt to legitimise the history of the abbey's possessions through association with its Roman past.

Other re-use of portable material culture in evidenced in a small sample of Roman mosaic work which was discovered during excavations at St Albans abbey and is now held in the abbey collection (Figure 36). Although the provenance of the tiles is uncertain, they closely resemble samples of mosaic from the Roman theatre at Verulamium (Figures 37 and 38). This sample of mosaic consists of white and dark clay stone tiles arranged in a pattern bordered by a solid section of terracotta pieces cut from old roof tiles. Due to the prevalence of high status Roman town houses at Verulamium, the site boasts an impressive selection of mosaics, most of which are on display in the Verulamium museum (Figures 39 and 40), and one particularly impressive example is housed in its own building on site in the Verulamium park (Figure 41). It is possible that at least part of this rich collection of mosaics may have been visible during the Middle Ages and taken for re-use in the abbey, and there is no mention of mosaics in the literary accounts of salvaging. Hence the discovery of the mosaic pieces at the abbey may indicate that they were re-used in the medieval flooring, replicating their original function in the medieval period. The current flooring of the abbey is completely replaced, so we are unable to tell for certain whether this was the case. The nature of the tiles as a slab of concrete with inset *tesserae* was not a typical example of Norman flooring, and the mosaic may have recreated its function after being salvaged from the Roman town as a deliberate statement of re-use.

Rosalind Niblett proposes that several columns in the outer decoration of the tower were of Roman origin (Figure 42).[257] The incorporation of this portable stonework in the tower

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[256] Oman, 'The Jewels of St Albans Abbey': 82.

[257] Niblett, *Verulamium: the Roman city of St. Albans*, Figure 2.

indicates a direct engagement with recognisably Roman artefacts in the Norman abbey, as Roman columns are one of the most commonly recycled pieces of Roman stonework. Art historians frequently cite the re-use of columns as one of the most obvious, deliberate and intentional acts of re-use. Additionally, the earliest sketches of the internal columns of St Albans abbey tower show that they are of different heights and shapes.[258] These lantern baluster shafts vary between square, round, square flanked by two round semicircles, and one is octagonal. Some of the shafts have been built (or repaired) in two sections, at different heights; and the semicircular sections appended to some of the square columns may originally have been whole columns which were split in half. The Bucklers claim that the bases and capitals of these columns are Norman, but the seemingly random arrangement of, and differences between, the columns themselves strongly suggest that they have been reused.[259]

The south transept interior of the Norman abbey also contains a series of baluster shafts in the triforium arcading, as well as two in the north transept (Figures 43 and 44). A baluster shaft, in this context, refers to the dividing column of a window in late Saxon Romanesque architecture, positioned in arched openings in the wall surface. It has been proposed that, in contrast to the re-used Roman columns in the tower, these shafts are Anglo-Saxon in origin, possibly taken from the pre-Conquest abbey church.[260] The incorporation of these shafts into the Norman abbey may well have been a deliberate statement of continuity with the Anglo-Saxon past. This may have been different to the way Roman remains were re-used, but alerts us to the possibility that some of the Roman remains in the Norman abbey may have been translated through the same type of re-use in the Saxon abbey. Roberts notes that the construction technique of the arches over the columns in the south transept is imprecise, filling the gaps in the voussoirs with mortar or stone, which was an Anglo-Saxon method of construction.

This indicates either that the Norman masons under Robert were either inexperienced at Norman arch construction, or they were deliberately emulating a more "rustic" style of construction when building the arches to match the Anglo-Saxon columns. The columns are topped by exposed brick herringbone decoration, demonstrating a nuanced relationship between the evocation of the Anglo-Saxon and Roman histories of St Albans. The Anglo-Saxon columns in the South transept are interspersed with plain, supposedly Norman column shafts and cushion capitals which form the piers and abutment on either side.[261] Hence, it is possible that the interior of St Albans contained both Norman and re-used Roman columns (like the exterior of the tower),

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[258] J.C. and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban*, 123-127.

[259] J.C. and C.A. Buckler. *A history of the architecture of the abbey church of St Alban* , 133.

[260] Roberts, 'The Abbey fabric', 26.

[261] Roberts, 'The Abbey fabric', 26.

as well as Anglo-Saxon columns which are not on display in the south transept. This complex decorative scheme highlights the importance of re-used portable Roman masonry. It draws together several elements of the abbey's physical legacy and shows that the approach to re-used remains across the Anglo-Saxon and Norman phases was complex and deliberately referential. The builders and architect of the abbey chose to incorporate these remains together, and this expressed a need for continuity with the Anglo-Saxon and Roman physical pasts.

2.5.4 Patronage and the Romanesque: Paul of Caen, Lanfranc and Robert the Mason

This brings us to an investigation of who exactly was involved in the processes of the patronage, design and construction of St Albans abbey, about whom we can obtain information from textual sources. While only the uppermost echelons of society are clearly represented in the historical documentation relating to the abbey, we can infer from descriptions in the *Gesta Abbatum* that the salvaging of Roman building material in the Anglo-Saxon period was commissioned by the abbots, and carried out by 'diggers'. Whether these men were monks or local labourers is unknown. There would have been an additional salvage operation in the late eleventh-century to meet the needs of the considerably larger Norman church. There was clearly a hierarchy of patronage at St Albans, from the Anglo-Norman abbots down to those charged with digging up Roman remains. An additional level of this hierarchy is referred to in the section of the *Gesta Abbatum* on the abbacy of Paul of Caen, where Matthew Paris records the land and privileges granted to Robert Mason, the master builder of the Norman abbey. Robert Mason may have supervised this second salvage operation in the late eleventh-century and helped select suitable material for use in the abbey. Along with Paul of Caen, Robert Mason was one of the key known figures involved in building the Norman Abbey, and he was richly rewarded for his efforts:

> "Concessit etiam idem Abbas Paulus Roberto Caementario, et haeredibus sui, pro artificio suo et labore, qui prae omnibus caementariis suo tempore pollebat, terram de Syreth, et terram de Wanthone, et unam domum in villa Sancti Alban, solutam et quietam".[262]

> [Now too Abbot Paul granted to Robert the Mason, and his heirs, on account of his skill and labour, in which he excelled over all other masons at the time, the land of Syreth, and the land of Wanthorn, and one house in the town of St Albans free and unfettered.][263]

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[262] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 63.

[263] Own translation. Syreth had been a holding of the abbey, as part of the original grant by Offa to the monastery, and was cleared under Abbot Leofstan in the tenth century. While Robert returned his holdings

Robert is one of the only master masons named in the eleventh century in England, and the only person involved in a building project named as mason rather than architect. Robert's presence allows us a unique insight into the decisions behind the re-use of Roman remains, because while the directions to use Roman materials came from the abbots, Robert would have played an integral part in their salvaging. He would also have assessed how best to employ the Roman remains according to the conventions of Romanesque architecture, and directed his builders in that regard.

As a consequence of the high levels of re-used material employed in building the abbey, Norman builders at St Albans departed from several conventions of English post-Conquest Romanesque building techniques. In doing so, they added the re-use of Roman material remains to the cultural, political and ecclesiastical implications that were bound up with the Romanesque style and its traditional materials. Many other contemporary Romanesque buildings in England employed Caen stone, imported from France at great expense and effort.[264] The use of Caen stone in England was always confined to high status buildings associated with royal influence through William and Matilda's connections with Caen. Its use in English Romanesque buildings conveyed not only notions of costliness, but also significant political prestige (more in Discussion Chapter). Despite the lack of building stone at St Albans, it is still exceptional in its re-use of Roman material during the early Norman period. It is documented in the continuation of Paris' *Gesta Abbatum* that Caen stone was used at St Albans in later monastic buildings during the abbacy of John Moot (1376-1401)[265], so it is clear that the abbey was not only capable of acquiring it, but that the use of the stone remained so costly and important that it was considered significant enough to record. The fact that it was not incorporated into the original Norman abbey indicates a conscious decision by the early abbots and builders *not* to use Caen stone, and that the meanings communicated by the Roman stonework were valued over the political and economic prestige of other available materials.

This choice may in part have been driven by practical reasons. Paul of Caen's late eleventh-century church was a third as large again as Canterbury cathedral, indicating that Paul may have adopted the monumentalism of continental Romanesque architecture. However, this scale which had been previously unseen in England prior to the Conquest became a trait of English Romanesque architecture. The size of St Albans abbey may have influenced Paul's choice

at Syreth to the Abbey upon his death, it is clear that he received ample recognition for his contribution to the Abbey (He relinquished this property in order to appease the dissatisfaction at the convent that the land had been taken off a local woman).

[264] Tatton-Brown, 'Building Stone in Canterbury c.1070-1525', 70.

[265] Matthew Paris, (Walsingham, Thomas). *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani. (*New York: Kraus reprint of 1867-69 Rolls series edition, volume III, 1965), 238.

to build using Roman material, as the cost may simply have been too great to undertake a different church in imported stone. However, it would still have been possible to plan a smaller, more affordable church, and as such, it is clear that the decision to re-use Roman material on this scale was made during the planning of the building.

It is likely that that Lanfranc was heavily involved in the planning and financing of the new abbey church at St Albans.[266] Considering that Paul of Caen would have spent considerable time at Caen as a young monk of the Abbaye Aux Hommes under Lanfranc,[267] it is surprising that he chose not to follow Lanfranc's lead at Canterbury by importing stone from Caen for use at St Albans. This is compounded by the similarities noted by Christopher Brooke between the plan of the monastic church at Caen and St Albans abbey, which are almost identical in their layout.[268] Unlike the re-use of Roman brickwork possibly copied from Italian examples, St Albans abbey and Caen also share aspects of architectural design, such as horizontal string courses between the stages and large round arches with stepped moulding.[269]

Other cultural factors may have influenced Paul's decision to use Roman building material. Christopher Brooke has remarked that the abbey church can be likened to the buildings and churches in Lombardy and southern Germany which often re-used Roman brick. Paul's origins are relatively unknown, but we do know that Lanfranc originated from Pavia, in Northern Italy. As he was a relative of Paul, it is likely that Paul too originated from the region, which abounds in buildings which heavily utilise salvaged Roman remains, particularly brick, such as San Michele in Pavia, or Sant' Ambrogio in Milan. Paris chronicles that Lanfranc also helped himself from the hoard of salvaged material at St Albans: 'Ditaverat enim ipsum Archepiscopus Lanfrancus, et ipsum, electum...'[270] (Indeed, Archbishop Lanfranc enriched himself, and selected choice pieces himself).[271] Lanfranc's presence at the Abbey prior to the selection of construction material may indicate that it may even have been a joint choice between him and Paul to use the material collected from the Roman town, especially considering Lanfranc's role in paying for the church.

This form of recycling could suggest that the deference to Roman culture through the physical re-use of Roman remains in England may have been partially translated via Italian re-use traditions. These would have been different from both continental and English Norman perceptions of Classical Rome. The relative proximity of Northern Italy to the Holy City may have

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[266] Brooke, 'St Albans, the great abbey', 46.

[267] Brooke, 'St Albans, the great abbey', 44.

[268] Brooke, 'St Albans, the great abbey', 48-49.

[269] Roberts. 'The Abbey fabric', 35.

[270] Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum*, 52.

[271] Own translation.

meant that the translation of Roman building material may have been seen as more of a cultural continuity, rather than re-use. This may explain why Paul combined re-use with building material from the Anglo-Saxon abbey. While Paul adopted some architectural features from his early continental positions in Normandy for his abbey church, he also distinctly chose to do so utilising the Roman building material salvaged by the Anglo-Saxon abbots, as well as the Anglo-Saxon columns in the south transept and the emulation of tile banding at the pre-Conquest church of St Michael's. This attitude contradicts Matthew Paris' accusation that Paul failed to translate the remains of Offa and destroyed the tombs of the Anglo-Saxon abbots, of whom he was supposedly dismissive:

> "Quos rudes et idioteas consuevit appellare- delevit, vel contemnendo eos quia Anglicos, vel invidendo, quia fere omnes stripe regali, vel magnatum praeclaro sanguine, feurant procreati."

> [He described them as uncivil and unintelligent. Either because he thought they were inferior because they were English, either because he was jealous that they were all members of a royal family or had royal blood.]

Paul's decision to re-use the Roman building material salvaged in the Saxon period displays an engagement with both the Anglo-Saxon traditions of the abbey, as well as the town's Roman past. Following the Conquest, St Albans had to secure patronage by asserting the primacy of the abbey. Paul did so by maintaining, and even establishing, the abbey's connection with the Saxon past. Even if Paul was personally disdainful towards his Saxon predecessors, he may have realised that there was a need for the abbey to re-use Saxon remains. The translation of Roman remains via the Saxon church formed an integral part of this process, as they could both legitimate and supersede the abbey's connection with the Anglo-Saxon past. The amalgamation of Roman brick with a cruciform Anglo-Norman Romanesque design as well as Anglo-Saxon remains, demonstrates a variety of influences on Paul of Caen and Lanfranc, prominent members of the Anglo-Norman elite. All were necessary to secure the assertion that St Albans had a long and important past.

2.6 Conclusion

The re-use of Roman material culture at St Albans demonstrates a sophisticated engagement with all aspects of the local Roman British past, expressed in both literature and the buildings of the medieval town. Pre-Conquest writing discusses the topography of St Albans directly related to cult of St Alban and the performance of Alban's miracles as he walked to his death. Roger of Wendover's multilayered description of Alban's journey through the imagined Roman landscape

legitimised St Albans' hagiographical traditions by establishing that these existed within a real physical setting which could still be seen at Verulamium. However, Wendover's re-worked accounts of the hellish Roman theatre, while derived from personal observation, did not necessarily reference the past, but could have been imagined as a fantastical space for moral instruction and warning.

The twelfth-century saw increasing focus upon the physical aspects of the St Albans story, through another re-imagining of the Roman town in St Alban's day. William of St Albans' prologue, set in the sub-Roman period, was so firmly grounded in the material remains left by the Romans that the anonymous author was literally reading their account off an inscription on a wall. The site of the abbey, possibly over the late Christian shrine of St Alban, as well as late-Roman, early Anglo-Saxon and late Anglo-Saxon burials and monastic buildings, demonstrates the topographical re-use at St Albans. The re-use of Roman sites and Roman building material may show a practical or economic incentive for the re-use of cheap available building material, but by building over prominent Roman buildings and emulating Roman decorative techniques, medieval builders and patrons at a parish level fully intended to reference the decoration seen in the Roman buildings at Verulamium.

The prolific writings of Matthew Paris, who describes the salvaging of Roman building material in the late-Saxon period, provide an imaginative account which may have derived in part from personal observation. The wondrous discoveries of the abbots include an ancient *Vita,* and various unmistakeably Roman artefacts such as columns, glass, amphorae and inscriptions. This account makes it clear that the late-Saxon and Norman abbots engaged directly with the surviving Roman landscape and built environment, and that portable finds recovered at this time, such as Roman columns and the Roman cameo of St Albans, were retained for several centuries. Paris drew attention to the salvage operation nearly two hundred years after it took place, indicating that the origin of the building material of the abbey and other Roman remains were significant features of twelfth-century historical writing.

Paris' drawings of the construction of the abbey church during the time of Offa show his obvious interest in Roman material finds, the Roman town, and the physical surroundings of the Romanesque and Anglo-Saxon abbeys. Authority and creative enterprise were derived in equal measure from the physical remains of the Roman town, as the twelfth-century penchant for descriptive innovation was employed by monastic authors at St Albans. In several cases, Roman remains such as the walls, forum, and theatre were even described or re-used for a specific purpose. Accounts of these remains were tailored to suit the specific function of the buildings and the cultural resonances with which the legacy of Rome at St Albans flourished.

Re-use in St Albans abbey shows the personal interests of Paul of Caen, Lanfranc and Robert the Mason in the material history of Verulamium; their architectural innovation in the Norman abbey; and their visual representations of physical culture from the Roman British past. Re-use in the abbey also demonstrates the influence of local Anglo-Saxon builders who may have been employed by the abbey. The perception of Norman building traditions as a homogenous foreign architectural style should be re-examined in light of the input from local masons, and their collaboration with the Norman abbots in both the salvaging of Roman material and its re-use. Traditions of the martyrdom at St Albans directly contributed to the decision to build the massive Norman Romanesque abbey in the immediately post-Conquest period.

The Benedictine monastic movement sought places of previous religious significance all over England from which to derive authority for their own, alien foundations. They brought with them the monumental Romanesque style of the continent, but soon adapted to incorporate local and historicised material remains. The aims of the monastic Norman elite were promoted via association with the Roman town and early-Christian saint in the monumental abbey, which was unique in England for its almost entirely re-used Roman fabric. The use of Anglo-Saxon and Roman elements in the abbey coincided with the promotion of St Alban as an early Christian saint, which transcended Norman or Anglo-Saxon hagiographical culture and possibly acted as a unifying force for the new Norman monastic community. This is similar to Saxon re-use of prehistoric barrows, as one fifth to one quarter of prehistoric, Iron Age or Roman barrows were rebuilt and re-used with new inhumations from the fifth to the eighth centuries.[272] The barrow served as a 'time-less' liminal space, and may have been used to symbolically unite the past with the present.[273]

As twelfth- and thirteenth- century composition at St Albans was often related to property claims and monastic status, literary references to Roman material remains were a way of asserting or justifying the antiquity of the monastery. Re-use and writing about re-use was diversified, both justifying ownership via material assets and the lengthy historical development of the town. However, the promotion of the Roman and Anglo-Saxon past at St Albans may not only have been a direct result of claims to power or legitimacy; it may have also been a form of edification for the monks of St Albans. It may demonstrate enjoyment or pride in the past, which can be seen in all forms of cultural production at the abbey. The apparent embellishment and ornamentation of the 'Alban myth' throughout time reinforces this idea of the creation of collective memory for the monks of St Albans. This may have had far reaching consequences for

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[272] Williams, 'Ancient Landscapes and the Dead: 6-7.

[273] Williams, 'Ancient Landscapes and the Dead: 24-25.

the promotion of Norman authority in England, as the native population and the incoming monks were deferent to this constructed Norman tradition.

The presence of Verulamium in such close proximity to St Alban's monastery would have helped keep the Roman past at the forefront of monastic experience, and this is reflected in writing as well as in the often unconventional building program adopted by the early Norman abbots. While this tradition appears insular, focussed specifically on events and personalities in the abbey and town, it would also have been witnessed and heard by the lay elite who visited the abbey, as St Albans was one of the foremost institutions of hospitality near London in the twelfth century. Roman remains were also used to teach the incumbent monks about the history of the abbey in order to allow them to and participate fully in the spiritual past of St Albans. Roman remains became the medium through which important figures and events in the abbey's history achieved substance and validity. Roman remains were used to commemorate the antiquity and authority of the abbey.

Hagiographical and historical texts at St Albans relate the early Christian experience of Alban at the town; and the copying of specific Roman building styles and techniques expresses a localised engagement with the Roman past. Hence, re-use at St Albans provided an alternative representation of the past than sweeping Norman narratives which claimed a sense of Empire or Conquest. This suited the agenda of the Norman abbots, as they strove to promote their own local saint to their own monks, as well as royal and other elite Norman benefactors who frequented the abbey. St Albans, like other post-Conquest Benedictine foundations, was competing for donations from patrons. The re-use of Roman material culture, and references to the local Roman material past allowed the abbot and the monks to carefully, and successfully promote the legacy of St Alban and the abbey. This chapter has demonstrated that the Roman remains present at medieval St Albans affected the entire creation of the town's historical past, and the understanding of the medieval town should be considered fully in relation to the Roman remains of Verulamium.

Chapter Four: Chester

4.1 Introduction and history of Chester

Chester was an important medieval urban centre, which had once been a Roman military settlement. At Chester, Roman material culture was heavily re-used throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, and marked transitions can be seen in the reappropriation of building space and materials from the end of the Roman occupation. However, the advent of the Normans, and an aggressive program of refurbishment and enlargement of the town and its churches by the Anglo-Norman earls, dominates an understanding of re-use in the town following the Conquest. The numerous parish churches at the site adhered largely to Chester's Roman plan and were constructed from Roman remains. In the pre-Conquest period, the city walls were refortified and extended, resulting in their partial retention by the Normans. Chester was also the site of two monasteries, which were rebuilt and re-founded in the post-Conquest period. Roman remains at Chester had a lasting impact upon the development of these later monasteries, both within and outside the city walls, and in all surviving Norman buildings in the city there is evidence for the re-use of Roman building material. Textual accounts produced at Chester provide multiple descriptions of these remains, in one case tied to a Christian topographical schema of the city, and other cases describe monumental Roman buildings or portable remains at the city. Interestingly, Chester is also the site of a Roman shrine, which may have carried multivalent pagan and religious meanings into the Norman period.

The majority of previous scholarship on Roman and medieval Chester come from David Mason's comprehensive overviews of the Roman town, and the published proceedings of the British Archaeological Association conference. There are also extensive published archaeology reports on the major sites at Chester, but these have not been collated into a large archaeological overview and remain separated from secondary historical sources. Richard Gem and Alan Thacker's thorough and prolific publications tend to dominate the early and medieval architectural overviews, but this thesis acts in addition to the recent archaeological survey of the Roman amphitheatre at Chester, which remains to be published beyond its preliminary report. This thesis supplements the recent project headed by Catherine Clarke and Keith Lilley titled 'Mapping Medieval Chester', which sought to examine the urban topography of Chester in light of documentary sources. This chapter particularly supplements Mark Faulkner's detailed analysis of a twelfth century praise poem, by contrasting it with the re-used aspects of the town's material environment. This thesis offers a survey of tooling and building fabric in the town, which has not been undertaken before, in order to examine how remains may have been used, repositioned, and possibly plastered. Lastly, this case-study carefully analyses the Roman shrine to Minerva and its continual use in religious practice into the middle ages.

Chester was first permanently inhabited by the twentieth legion in the first century AD, as one of three Roman legionary fortresses in Britain. Several phases of Anglo-Saxon habitation followed, with varying periods of prosperity in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. In the high medieval period, Chester was the site of a substantial town and seat of the prominent Norman earls of Chester (see Table 3 at the end of this section for a detailed timeline of events at Chester). The majority of extant medieval textual sources from Chester seem to be primarily composed of historical literature – charters, annals and chronicles. These date from the late Anglo-Saxon period for general overview documents; and the twelfth-century for locally produced monastic records.[274] Compared with other monastic towns, Chester did not have a particularly strong culture of literary production in the High Middle Ages. However there are three sources which are particularly important to the study of re-use at Chester. The first is a late-twelfth-century praise poem, *De Laude Cestrie,* composed at the monastery of St Werberg's. There is also a late-thirteenth century universal chronicle, which most likely derives architectural and material descriptions from earlier sources, and an early sixteenth century *Lyfe of St Werberg*, which can be used to chart the progression of embellishment and re-mediation of Roman material culture throughout Chester's literary history. Texts composed at Chester demonstrate instances of realistic observation of Roman remains, Rome's spiritual, rather than its imperial legacy, and representations of religious metaphors, such as the cross, in urban topographical descriptions.

Chester's ongoing importance as a Roman and medieval site owes much to its geographical location on the north-western border between England and Wales, with predominantly low lying geographical features and access to the Irish Sea (Figure 45). The shallow Cheshire plain consists of deposits of sand and clay, with older sedimentary red sandstone ridges protruding through. Chester itself sits inside a curve of the River Dee upon a red sandstone bluff, overlooking a natural crossing point of the river.[275] The town's building material is predominantly characteristic red sandstone which comes from several quarry sites on the river banks, or from other sites near the town.[276] This sandstone was used in construction during all phases of the town's history, making it slightly harder to identify instances of re-use than at St Albans, where bricks fell out of production after the Roman period. The evidence for settlement of

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[274] These are now published in collected volumes such as the Cartulary of Chester Abbey (St Werberg's), and the Charters of the Anglo-Norman earls of Chester, c. 1071-1237. They provide ample supplies of information for the historian examining Norman history; however, they do not contain much information which is useful for an examination of the re-use of Roman material culture, so it is from other literary sources that we must glean descriptions and references to re-use.

[275] David J.P. Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing, 2001), 23.

[276] The Lower Keuper beds eight miles away near Helsby provided stone of superior quality. Martin Henig. 'Chester and the Art of the Twentieth Legion'. In *Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture at Chester*, edited by Alan Thacker, (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2000), 1.

the area around Chester during the Iron Age period consists of individual farmsteads and not a nucleated community; so occupation was fairly sparse, though this type of settlement continued well into the Roman period.[277] Pre-Roman Chester would also have had an advantageous position with its situation on a natural harbour on the tidal estuary of the Wirral.[278]

The Roman fortress at Chester was built around 72-75 AD.[279] It could house a legion of up to six thousand men (Figure 46), and was built on a larger scale that other legionary fortresses in Britain. Some scholars claim that this was the result of an auxiliary unit, such as a cavalry unit also being attached to the fort, but recent academic work points to Chester being initially planned as a larger centre of administration in the north, with ostentatious and unorthodox buildings intended near the centre.[280] As a result of the increased size compared with other British fortresses, the northern half of the fortress was considerably longer, with twenty percent more space than the standard plan.[281] The early second-century fortress contained areas filled with barrack blocks, granaries, the central *principia* or headquarters building, several bath complexes, a hospital and storage buildings and bread ovens along the space inside the walls. It was supplied with adequate water from aqueducts and there was also a small civilian town to the south. By the third century, when soldiers were permitted to marry, this would have been fairly extensive and resembled a garrison town.[282] From 90-120 AD, the fortress was gradually rebuilt, and the existing stone amphitheatre outside the south east of the fortress was replaced by a far larger and grander stone amphitheatre.[283] The replacement of wooden structures with masonry continued throughout the town in the early second century as the harbour and *principia* buildings were improved and expanded. A building roughly elliptical in shape was begun to the north-west during the Flavian period (c80-220); it was completed during the Severan period, with some fourth-century alterations.[284]

As with all Roman towns, burial sites during the Roman period were extra-mural and followed the main routes out of the town. These areas were also lined with buildings; which were

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[277] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 25, 27.

[278] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 31.

[279] This is based on evidence from lead ingots and piping found at the site. Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles,* 44.

[280] David Mason, *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World*? (Chester: Chester City Council Cultural Services, 2000), 80; Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles,* 89.

[281] Mason, *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World?*

[282] Henig, 'Chester and the Art of the Twentieth Legion', 5.

[283] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles,* 143.

[284] Mason, David, *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World*?, vi.

probably commercial in nature and attached to the extramural civilian *canabae* settlement.[285] At the turn of the third century, the twentieth legion was involved in operations on the Hadrian's Wall frontier, but returned to Chester and commenced the process of completely rebuilding the fortress in conjunction with renovations throughout most settlements in Britain. This work was finished within a few decades – essentially replacing every building which was still standing, and rebuilding those which had been demolished or never fully completed. The garrison now had a full complement of masonry baths, barracks, headquarters, the elliptical building, drains and water supplies as well as properly planned and metalled streets.[286] An impressive array of funerary and sculptural stonework survives from this period, most of which is now held in the Grosvenor Museum. Additionally, there is evidence for a smaller period of refurbishment in the fourth century, followed by the eventual decline of the town in the fifth century AD.

Despite the decay of Romano-British urban life and monetary system following the withdrawal of the legions from Britain, several scholars suggest that the Chester was not completely abandoned in the early Anglo-Saxon period.[287] Alan Thacker states that "it may well have remained the focus of a sub-Roman principality or petty kingdom" following its increasingly civilian role in the late Roman period.[288] There are small amounts of documentary evidence relating to sites in Cheshire for the period, including reference in Bede to a synod held at Chester in c600 AD,[289] which implies that the site was ecclesiastically important. In the early seventh century, the Northumbrian king Æthelfrith assembled an army against the British sheltering at Chester, and monks of Bangor monastery which lay to the south of Chester were slaughtered by the Anglo-Saxon army as they prayed for a British victory. [290] A twelfth-century tradition states that the monastery of St John's was founded by the Mercian king, Æthelred, in the late seventh century. At this time, settlement most likely lay outside the city walls, as can be attested by St John's extramural presence. St John's occupied the area to the south east of the town in its own moated enclave at Bishop's borough, or 'Redcliffe' (according to Domesday).[291]

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[285] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 141.

[286] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 162.

[287] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 212.

[288] Alan Thacker,'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings' in *Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture at Chester,* (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2000), 16.

[289] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, edited by Bertrand Colgrave and R.A.B Mynors, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 139.

[290] Despite a Northumbrian victory at this battle, the area of Cheshire soon passed into Mercian hands. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History,* 141; 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', A History of the County of Chester, V.C.H.: Volume 5, part 1, (2003): 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 5th August 2011.

[291] 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 5th August 2011.

Several scholars propose that Gildas' *De Excidio Brittaniae* refers to Chester as the 'City of the Legions' when he discusses the martyrdom of St Alban and lesser known contemporaries Aaron and Julius 'Legionum urbis cives' (citizens of the City of the Legions).[292] Gildas describes the deaths of these and others during the Christian persecution in the time of Diocletian, and, while he is wrong in claiming that the persecution of Christians was carried out by Diocletian in Britain, the mention of their deaths at the site of Chester potentially dates the recorded history of the site to the Roman period. Gildas was obviously interested in representing his early martyrs in their appropriate setting, namely, a Roman town, and displays his knowledge of the Roman origins of the city. Gildas may have known of Chester's early Latinised name of 'castra legionis', choosing to situate the martyrdom of his Roman protagonists in this place.[293] Bede drew upon Gildas when compiling the *Historia Ecclesiastica* in the early eighth century, recounting the deaths of Aaron and Julius immediately after his account of the martyrdom of St Alban: "Passi sunt ea tempestate Aaron et Julius, legionis urbem cives, aliique utriusque sexis diversis in locis perplures" [About this time Aaron and Julius, both citizens of the City of the Legions, suffered, and many others of both sexes in various other places].[294]

In his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bede also discusses the Battle of Chester which took place in the early seventh century. This account provides another reference to the city, and further understanding of the etymology of Chester:

> "Siquidem post haec ipse, de quo diximus, rex Anglorum fortissimus Aedifrid collecto grandi exercitu ad Civitatem Legionem, quae a gente Anglorum Legacaestir, a Brettonibus Carlegion appelatur, maximam gentis perfidae stragem dedit."

> [For later on, that very powerful king of the English, Æthelfrith, whom we have already spoken of, collected a great army against the city of the legions which is called Legacaestir by the English, and more correctly Caerlegion (Chester) by the Britons, and made a great slaughter of that nation of heretics.][295]

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[292] Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, 92. Note that the other site which has been identified by historians as a 'city of the legions' is Caerleon in south-west Wales - an area with which Gildas may have been personally familiar.

[293] The short accounts of Gildas and Bede do not identify Chester by name, and there is a great deal of scholarly debate which disputes whether the 'City of the Legions' refers to Caerleon in Wales, or Chester. This disagreement relates to both Chester and Caerleon as legionary fortresses; but Caerleon's Old Welsh name of 'Cair Legion' was a direct translation of 'Legionem Urbs', which has led scholars to identify the site as Caerleon.

[294] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the* English, 34 and 35.

[295] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English* People, 141.

Here, Bede further demonstrates an understanding of the different names of Chester in relation to the 'City of the Legions'. This passage also definitively mentions Chester, unlike previous sources, as it tells of how the monks of Bangor came to the battle to pray for an English victory.

The Anglo-Saxon chronicle also recounts this particular battle, though it conflates the lengthy passage by Bede, and does not refer to the different names given to Chester- calling it only 'Legercystre'. It is clear then, that knowledge of the city's Roman past was passed down throughout the Anglo-Saxon period and transmitted to later medieval chroniclers through an interpretation of its name as 'Civitas Urbs', 'Civitas Legionem', 'Caer Legion', 'Legacastir' and 'Legeceaster'. There can have been little doubt in the minds of Norman scholars that the city had once been the home of a legionary force, and they may have inferred that many of the buildings that still stood into the twelfth century may have originally part of this Roman city. It is important to note that chroniclers who documented the history of the city felt it necessary to mention its Roman origins, and construct an elaborate etymological history derived from the city's Latin name. This shows an engagement with the Roman past, and demonstrates a pre-occupation with Roman culture and history at Chester by the late Anglo-Saxon period. William of Malmesbury, Lucian, Ranulph Higden and Henry Bradshaw– later chroniclers of Chester's history – were all aware of the Roman origins of the town.[296] The Roman 'City of the Legions' is inherently tied to the martyrdom narrative as well as other historical events, and demonstrates a cultural commonplace which would have recognisable to a medieval audience.

In 893 there was a Viking raid on Chester, which was 'then a deserted city in Wirral'[297]. This may have been the result of a growing awareness of the city's economic and strategic importance on the direct route between the Scandinavian kingdoms of Dublin and York.[298] In 907, the documented history of the city truly begins, with a version of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle reporting that Alfred's daughter Æthelflaed refortified a series of *burhs*[299], including Chester, in an ultimately successful campaign against the Danes. Following refortification of the walls, settlement began gradually to spread from the south and south-east (around St John's) back inside the city walls. The ecclesiastical precinct at St Werburg's occupied an abandoned area inside the city walls, but there is archaeological evidence of domestic timber buildings and other

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[296] M.V. Taylor. *Extracts from the Liber Lucian De Laude Cestrie, written about the year 1195 and now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.* (Edinburgh and London: The Record Society for Lancashire and Cheshire. Volume 64, 1912).

[297] Michael Swanton, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, translated and edited by M.J. Swanton, (London: The Orion Publishing Group, 1996), 88.

[298] V.C.H., 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 05 August 2011.

[299] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 17.

wooden halls built inside the Roman walls at this time.[300] There is also evidence of a bone working industry at Abbey Green near the Northgate, and fragments of 'Chester ware' pottery sherds have been found both within the city and along the south side of the walls near the river.[301] The foundation of several parish churches occurred in the early tenth century, which indicates that settlement was starting to require the services of parochial intra-mural foundations. [302]

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is the first medieval text which references the physical surrounds of the town. In an account of a ninth-century Northumbrian invasion, it discusses the pursuit of the British into a "ceastre on Wirhealum seo is Legaceaster gehaten"[303] [deserted city in Wirral, which is called Chester][304]. Clearly, after the earlier Battle of Chester, the interior of the city remained relatively unoccupied until the ninth century, but this passage repeatedly refers to the city as a 'fortress' which was capable of withstanding an assault for several days. It is clear that the Roman city walls still stood to some height at this point, and in 907, Æltheflaed, a Mercian princess, began a program of refortifications around the kingdom by restoring the *burh* of Chester.[305] A growing awareness with Roman material culture is evident in the pre-Conquest period, which was to come to fruition in literary production following the Conquest.

In the tenth century, Chester was an important administrative and military centre for the region, and functioned as a royal fortress. It was the base for several important tenth-century campaigns by its various rulers,[306] and had important connections with the Welsh, as well as a sizeable Hiberno-Norse community. This can be seen by clearly concentrated settlement in the south of the town near the harbour,[307] where trade with the Scandinavian communities around the Irish Sea would have found port on the mainland. Most importantly, tenth century Chester was the seat of the shire court, which may have been in existence from the early tenth century. This shire likely consisted of the twelve 'hundreds' listed in the Domesday survey of Cheshire and

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[300] Simon Ward et al., *Excavations at Chester. Saxon Occupation within the Roman Fortress.* (Chester: Chester City Council, 1994), 83.

[301] V.C.H,'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 05 August 2011.

[302] N.J. Alldridge,' Aspects of the topography of early medieval Chester'*, Journal of the Chester Archaeological society*, Volume 64, (1981): 6.

[303] Janet Bately. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A collaborative edition.* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1986),58.

[304] Entry for 893. Dorothy Whitelock, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, (Great Britain: Jarrold and Sons, 1961), 56.

[305] Whitelock, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 61.

[306] For a detailed history of the tenth century rulers of Chester- Æthelflaed, Æthelred, Edward the Elder and Æthelstan- as well as political events of the period, please see Thacker's 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 5th August 2011.

[307] 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 05 August 2011.

perhaps some parts of southern Lancashire.[308] Chester was also the site of a royal mint, which, by the mid tenth century, had risen in prominence to rival those of London, York and Winchester.[309] The importance of the mint demonstrates the level of royal interest in the town, and Thacker proposes that the Roman *principia* building would have provided a secure storage space 'for the large amounts of bullion required to service the mint'.[310]

In the eleventh century there were 600-650 houses in the city, arranged along several main thoroughfares within the city walls, with a population of around 2500-3000 people. Chester enjoyed the patronage of both the Mercian earls and the king, though the earl would have had increasing prominence with the rise of the role of 'ealdormen' throughout the eleventh century.[311] The other major power in Chester was the bishop of Lichfield, who administered the bishop's borough around St John's church; although the king, earl and bishop all had significant amounts of property in the city.[312] In the mid-eleventh century Earl Leofric significantly enriched the churches of St John's and St Werberg's, which held eight and twelve canons respectively during this period. It was only in the eleventh century that St Werberg's was rededicated as a monastic church.[313] The eleventh century street frontages of Chester were crowded, with long tenements stretching back behind the properties to make full use of access to the street.[314] This indicates that immediately prior to the Norman Conquest, the city would have had a genuinely urban appearance, with a regionally significant economic and political role.

In 1069-70, most likely out of loyalty to the family of the Anglo-Saxon Mercian earls, the men of Chester revolted against William the Conqueror, who responded by bringing his army from York and constructing a castle to the south of the town.[315] This early fortification can be seen in the large *motte* (currently occupied by university of Chester buildings), which would have required extensive destruction and remodelling in the area. When the first Norman earl, Hugh I, was appointed in 1071, the city was described as 'greatly wasted' from Norman retribution for the

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[308] N.J. Higham, *The Origins of Cheshire.* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press. 1993), 115.

[309] Mark A. S. Blackburn, *Anglo-Saxon monetary history: essays in memory of Michael Dolley*, (Leicester Leicester University Press, 1986), 144.

[310] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', p 18.

[311] For a detailed analysis of the rise of the ealdorman, please see Alan Thacker, 'The earldom of Chester and its charters: a tribute to Geoffrey Barraclough', *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*; Volume 71, (1991): 109-134.

[312] V.C.H., 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 5th August 2011.

[313] V.C.H. 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 05 August 2011.

[314] Roland Harris, 'The origins of the Chester Rows' in *Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture at Chester*, (Leeds, Maney Publishing, 2000), 146.

[315] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 21.

revolt.[316] Despite this, at the turn of the twelfth century, the town appeared to have recovered and was once again an important regional administrative and political centre. Throughout the twelfth century, several additions were made to the castle and precinct, including the construction of a stone keep and inner ward, formed by a curtain wall and four towers (one of which is the still visible 'Agricola's tower'). During the Norman period, the castle became the site of the earl's chief court, treasury and prison. The increasing autonomy of the Anglo-Saxon earldom in the pre-Conquest period was replicated in the Norman period, with the earls of Chester even further removed from royal control.[317] Despite a lack of interference in town planning in the centre of Chester, the construction of the castle would have also meant the town walls were extended to their current and fullest circuit, with the south and west walls running alongside the river. As a result, it is likely by this point that the south and west parts of the Roman city wall were gradually being dismantled.

During the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, a series of parish churches and religious houses were founded in the town. These were in addition to several smaller parish churches which had been founded during the Anglo-Saxon period (notably St Olave's and St Bridget's).[318] In 1075 the bishopric previously situated at Lichfield was moved to St John's.[319] This transfer considerably enhanced the status of the church, and validated the prominence of Chester and the church of St John's. In addition to this, Norman introduction of Benedictine monasticism meant that St Werberg's was re-consecrated from an Anglo-Saxon minster church in the autumn of 1092. This was a celebrated occasion of state, in which Earl Hugh invited Anselm, Abbot of Bec, to witness the foundation charter of the new community of Benedictine monks which the Earl had founded.[320] Despite the booming foundations of the Norman period, the medieval city of Chester was still very much influenced by elements of Roman Chester, and had also received many institutions in the town via Anglo-Saxon occupation of the town. Major Roman buildings, in various stages of disrepair, would have been visible throughout the area in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, and these were heavily utilised in continuous processes of re-use.

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[316] Of the 508 houses known to have existed in 1066, 205 had been lost by the 1070s and not rebuilt by 1086, based on evidence collated from the Domesday survey. Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 21.

[317] This privileged status was supported by a vast network of administrative officials who were responsible to the Earl. Some of these were remnants of similar Anglo-Saxon clerical functions, and all played important civic roles in the medieval city. V.C.H.,'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 05 August 2011.

[318] For an excellent overview of the development of parish churches in Chester, please see Alldridge, *The topography of early medieval* Chester: 5-31.

[319] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 23.

[320] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', p 24.

William of Malmsbury tells us that "Chester is known as the City of the Legions, as the veterans of the Julian legions settled there",[321] replicating previous descriptions of the town as a Roman settlement. He proceeds to provide a description of the city, mainly concerning the produce available, and Chester's main trade links with the Irish. He briefly mentions that there was an ancient nunnery, which was filled with monks by the Earl Hugh, but does not give any architectural or topographical description. William, however, in several other places in his *Historia*, makes observations about buildings and Roman remains. William of Malmesbury includes a praise poem by Hildebert of Lavardin on the fallen splendour of Rome in the twelfth century, which demonstrates his obvious engagement with Rome's history and the topos of the fallen city in ruins.[322] Despite his lack of information about Chester, we can see that there was already a culture of awareness about physical surrounds and traditions of the city's Roman history.

Descriptions of architectural re-use start to appear in the later twelfth century as a significant engagement with the built environment and aspects of the Roman past. William of Malmesbury is part of the continuation of this tradition, and his early form of conscious antiquarianism bridges the gap between early etymological accounts of the town which highlight its Roman origins, and later, fuller descriptions of the town's attributes, which started to emerge from the twelfth century onwards. Lucian's dense text *De Laude Cestrie* ('in praise of Chester') continued Malmesbury's descriptive traditions. Lucian composed this text between 1195 and 1200 while a monk at St Werberg's, although he undertook his novitiate and early education most likely at St John's outside the city walls.[323] This text incorporated a description of the medieval city of Chester as part of a framework for an ecclesiastical treatise on the town's religious life, and a great portion of the text is concerned with Roman and medieval topography.[324] Lucian's text offers

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[321] William of Malmesbury *Gesta pontificum Anglorum* (Deeds of the English Bishops) Vol. I, edited and Translated by M. Winterbottom and R.M. Thomson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2007).

[322] Hildebert of Lavardin. *Hildeberti Cenomanninsis Episcopi*. Edited by A.B. Scott, (Munich: Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teuneriana, 2001), 7-9.

[323] Mark Faulker, 'Introduction: The Manuscript' in *Lucian's De Laude Cestrie*, Mapping Medieval Chester Project', http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk/texts/facing/Lucian.html?page=0, accessed 25th November 2009.

[324] Written in Latin, the text is a metrical poem of just over 82,000 words, surviving as a single autograph manuscript, Bodley 672. The earlier sections pertain more exclusively to an actual description of the town; while the final two-fifths of the text are more concerned with the organisation of the church and the roles of individual members within it, without specifically refer to Chester. It is a small manuscript, containing 198 leaves with frequent abbreviations and densely packed text. The manuscript is in good condition, written in Lucian's clear, even hand and contains little decoration, save for rubric capitals and headings, and a topographical diagram which will be discussed in greater detail. The text has been annotated and at times summarised by another hand, contemporaneous with Lucian, meaning the text was in use during the late twelfth-century as a source book for composing sermons. Taylor. *Extracts from the Liber Lucian De Laude Cestrie, written about the year 1195 and now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, 20.

the reader a spiritual geography of Chester, and grounds the reader's journey within a material schema pertaining to several aspects of the town's history. His text engages with the Roman past, combining current perceptions of Rome with an appraisal of Roman remains, and buildings in Chester which re-used Roman building material.

Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*, composed in the late thirteenth century, also contains a small description of Chester and a short praise poem which describes the city's Roman remains. Higden's *Polychronicon* contains a varied universal history and geography of the known world, surviving as three versions in more than 120 manuscripts from the fourteenth century which have a highly intricate transmission history.[325] Ranulph Higden entered St Werberg's monastery as a monk in 1299 and lived there until his death in 1363/64.[326] The work demonstrates extensive knowledge of biblical and classical history, and Higden demonstrates a deep understanding of Roman political and military events, and the topography and major landmarks in Rome. Higden spent most of his time at St Werberg's in the composition of the *Polychronicon*, though he is also responsible for several other works in addition to this.[327] This text demonstrates that by the late thirteenth century, the library at St Werberg's was extensive enough to provide a large amount of source material for this text and Higden displays a wide-ranging interest and knowledge in Roman affairs. However, Higden does not make any reference to Lucian's text, and M.V. Taylor proposes that Lucian's text was presented as a gift to the patron of St John's outside Chester and would not have been seen by Higden.[328] It is no wonder then, that Higden refers explicitly to the Roman origins of the town in his description of Chester.

Immediately prior to his description of Chester, Higden provides information about Caerleon from Gerald of Wales, discussing the Roman origins and landmarks of the town as well as architectural descriptions of Roman remains.[329] Following this, Higden tells us that "the

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[325] Higden lists his sources in Book One, Chapter II, comprising of over forty previous authors who are specified by name according to which passage or section of the narrative their works have informed. Most of his work, like other medieval authors, is composed of material taken almost verbatim from his sources. When he provides his own opinion, he marks the start of the passage with an 'R' for Ranulphus. Recent translations and editions of Higden's text include Book VI from MS Cotton Tiberius D vii; and the most useful source for this thesis is Book I, published by the Rolls' series in 1865-66 and derived from Cambridge St John's College MS 204 and British Library MS Additional 24194. Ronald Waldron, 'Introduction' in *John Trevisa's translation of the* Polychronicon *of Ranulph Higden, Book VI. An edition based on British Library MS Cotton Tiberius D vii*. Middle English Texts Series, Heidelberg, 2004, xiii, xvi.

[326] Waldron, Ronald. 'Introduction' in *John Trevisa's translation of the* Polychronicon *of Ranulph Higden, Book VI. An edition based on British Library MS Cotton Tiberius D vii*. Middle English Texts Series, Heidelberg, 2004.

[327] Waldron, 'Introduction', ii.

[328] M.V. Taylor, 'Introduction' in *Extracts from the Liber Lucian De Laude Cestrie, written about the year 1195 and now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*. The Record Society for Lancashire and Cheshire. Volume 64, 1912, 2.

[329] Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon*, 74-78.

founder of the Chester, the other 'City of the Legions' is unknown, but he who sees the foundations of the great stones would prefer that it were the work of Romans, or other giants, rather than the Britons."[330] Higden generally ascribed to Geoffrey of Monmouth's schema of British foundation myths, but in this instance he is not able to, merely stating that the founders were unknown. Higden provides an etymology of Chester: "Haec aliquando vocata est Britannice Caerleon, Latine Legecestria; nunc autem dicta est Cestria sive Urbs Legionum".[331] [This is sometimes called in British 'Caerleon', in Latin Legecestria (City of the Legions), but now it is called Chester, other than the City of the Legions].[332] Higden continues with the Roman history of the town, whereby Julius and Claudius Caesar sent their troops there to win Ireland. He then tells the reader of the Northumbrian destruction of the town and the rebuilding of 'Elfleda' (Æthelflaeda) in an almost verbatim paraphrasing of the wording in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

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[330] Nam intuenti fundamenta lapidum enormium videtur potius Romano seu giganto labore, quam Britannico sudore fundate exitisse. Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon*, 78.

[331] Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon*, 78.

[332] Own translation.

Table 3: Timeline of events at Chester

72-75AD	Roman occupation of Chester begins with the construction of a legionary fortress, capable of supporting 6000 men.
90-120 AD	Fortress rebuilt.
3rd century	Twentieth Legion moves to Hadrian's wall frontier. When they return, complete renovation of the entire fortress.
5th century	Decline of the fortress and withdrawal of the legions from Britain.
Early 7th C	The Northumbrian king Æthelfrith assembled an army against the British sheltering at Chester at the Battle of Chester.
689	Supposed foundation of St John's by Mercian king, Æthelred, according to the *Annales Cestrienses* and Gerald of Wales.
Late 7th - end 9th	First period of Mercian rule until the Scandinavian incursions.
875	Relics of St Werberg were transferred to Chester by the monks of Hanbury fleeing Danish invasions (recorded in *Annales Cestriensis).*
907-980	Foundation of the Saxon *burh* and the most prosperous period of Saxon occupation. Foundation of the church of St Werberg's and a refortification of the city walls by Ætheflaed.
980	Viking raid on Chester.
10th century	Wars of King Æthelred's reign.
1057	Leofric, earl of Chester repaired, and conferred privileges on the collegiate church of S. John, and the church of S. Werburg.[333]
1070-71	Harrying of the North, in which Chester fields its own rebellion against the Conqueror.[334]
1075	The bishopric of the north-west Mercian see is moved from Lichfield to St John's under Bishop Peter (this was moved to Coventry 1102).
1180s	Work on the earliest sections of St Werberg's commenced.
1093	Anselm visits Chester upon the invitation of Earl Hugh and refounded the Benedictine Abbey of St Werberg. He appointed Richard, a monk of Bec as its first abbot. The east end is consecrated.
11th/early 12th C	Building commences on the preliminary stages of St John's. This continues through the later twelfth century.
Early 12th century	Most of the Norman parish churches are founded and recorded during this period.
12th- 13th C	The final parts of St John's and St Werberg's churches completed.
circa 1195	Lucian spends up to five years composing his *De Laude Cestrie.*
Late 13th C	Ranulph Higden composes his *Polychronicon.*

[333] As William of Malmesbury relates in his Chronicle, *De Gestis Anglorum*, Book 2.

4.2 The landscape of medieval Chester

4.2.1 Lucian's *De Laude Cestrie* and the topography of the city: "He may see the text with one eye and the city with the other."

Virtually all of Chester's medieval topography was dictated by the initial layout of the Roman street plan, which also had a profound impact upon the way medieval people perceived and wrote about the topography of the town. Chester's Roman fortress was built in playing card shape with three main gates and a nothern minor gate, through which roads crossed in a 'T' which met in the centre of the fort. The continued re-use of Roman streets may have been partially dictated by the location of the Roman gates which stood for centuries. In some cases, minor roads are also followed in the post-Roman era, such as that which led from the back of the *principia* to form a complete cross in the medieval period. The medieval row system, whereby shop frontage is created from a split level building (with an undercroft, shop level and living areas above) derived from re-using the same spaces as Romano-British street frontages.[335] While these were relatively common in English towns during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Chester's 'rows' had a slope of two metres from the street upwards to the rear of the properties, caused by the presence of underlying debris of Roman buildings at the time of their construction.[336]

Not only was Roman building material re-used at Chester, but underlying remains also influenced topography and wider scale architectural design. In Lucian's literal and metaphorical meanderings through the town, the landscape he encounters is frequently discussed in relation to the legacy of the Roman church, and parallels with Rome's buildings of antiquity. Lucian's praise poem, *De Laude Cestrie* demonstrates an engagement with many aspects of Roman remains, which a local twelfth-century audience would have understood. Ideas about Rome and Rome's material past were propagated by this text as part of a wider cultural tradition at Chester. Lucian discusses the gates of the city extensively, using them to provide the early structure of his narrative; in relation to their proximity and importance to different churches, and their meaning for religious experience in the town.

Following the first two pages of this manuscript containing a table with the dates of Easter between 1195 and 1224, Lucian's actual text opens on fol 2v: "Tempus et locus et rerum lapsus sensate cuique tribuunt suadibilem, etiam sine literis lectionem" [The state of the times, the location of things and the occurrence of events offer persuasive unwritten instruction to each

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[335] Roland Harris, 'The origins of the Chester Rows' in *Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture at Chester*, British Archaeological Society Conference Transactions, (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2000), 132.

[336] Townhouses were also built over shallow stone bedrock, which meant that they had higher than usual undercroft areas, which led to the formation of the walkway galleries at Chester. Harris, 'The origins of the Chester Rows', 147.and David J.P. Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing, 2001), 11.

intelligent being].[337] This establishes the essential premise of the text, that every aspect of geography and history reveals a universal truth to all sentient humans. There is a clear anagogical framework within Lucian's poem, which explores the urban landscape of Chester as a representation of God's will on earth – the 'unwritten instruction'. The depiction of Christian beliefs in material form demonstrates a reliance of the medieval mind on another aspect of Rome's legacy- the holy Roman church. Lucian not only portrays the secular aspects of the Roman British occupation, but its arguably more lasting and important creation in the form of the ecclesiastical community. He relates the history and a description of the town to several representations of Rome, and both religious and mundane aspects of the town are explored in terms of Rome as a spiritual counterpart. The local audience at Chester in the twelfth-century would have understood the implications of this for a spiritual link between Chester and Rome.

Lucian references the cruciform plan of the city early in his text, and relates it to the four points of the cross and the four evangelists. Left over as a result of the Roman military street plan, Lucian adds a memorial or mnemonic dimension to the crossed streets when he states:

Habet etiam plateas duas eqilineas et excellentes in modum benedicte crucis, per transversum sibi obvias et se transeuntes, que deinceps fiant quattuor ex duabus.

[Chester has two perfectly straight streets which intersect and cross over in the middle like the blessed cross, so that four streets are made out of two].[338]

Lucian tells his reader that these streets have their origins in the four gates of the city, linking Roman remains with the physical topography of the town and a spiritual representation of the image of the cross. These four gates correspond to the direction of the four winds and the extent of the known world (India, Wales, Ireland and Norway). In this case, it is the four arms of the city, and not a tri-colonic syntax which conveys spiritually important themes through the use of numbers or the symbol of the cross.

Lucian urges his reader to stand in the marketplace and turn to the east to face St John's, to the west to face St Peter's, to the North for St Werberg's and to the south for St Michael's. Here he commences a description of the spiritual significance of the location of each church, which occupies the next hundred and forty pages.[339] The confluence of the cross imparts significant spiritual meaning on the layout of Chester's urban topography, and this can be seen a final time

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[337] Lucian. 'Excerpt one' in *De Laude Cestrie*, edited by Mark Faulkner on the Mapping medieval Chester project, http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk/texts/facing/Lucian.html?page=0, accessed 25th November 2009.

[338] Own translation, after Faulker and Taylor.

[339] Mark Faulker, 'Introduction: The Text' in *Lucian's De Laude Cestrie*, Mapping Medieval Chester Project', http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk/texts/facing/Lucian.html?page=0, accessed 25th November 2009.

when considering the depiction of the extra-mural religious houses which surround the town. This consists of a description of four Cistercian abbeys: Combermere to the east, Basingwerk to the west, Stanlaw to the north and Pulton to the south. This description is accompanied by a pictorial diagram in the manuscript which forms the points of a cross (See Figure 47). Lucian tells us that the symbol of the cross is carried outside the city walls and the location of the monasteries indicates that whatever is in the middle will be bright and nourishing.[340] It is clear that in relating the religious houses of Chester and the ideal organisation of the church to a description of urban topography, Lucian grounds his text in a spatial framework which encompasses the Roman church, Christ on the cross and spiritually significant numerology.

This symbolism continues when Lucian describes the marketplace (*fora*) in the middle of the cross, as the provider of nourishment for the town. Christ's position in the centre of this arrangement is imitated by Lucian's system, with the marketplace occupying the area originally allocated under Roman settlement for the most important functions of the town. It is interesting to note that Lucian uses the classical 'fora' when discussing the marketplace at Chester; unlike a contemporary parallel which uses the word 'mercato' (this is from a local charter produced at Chester in the twelfth-century).[341] This may be coincidental, but the use of mercato appears to be localised, medieval Latin, and Lucian deliberately chose to use the classical form of 'meeting place' rather than associate it with any particularly commercial overtones. This is interesting when we consider that the rest of this passage is devoted to the buying and selling of goods, and may indicate a conscious decision to emulate classical architectural terms. Not only was the ecclesiastical landscape of medieval Chester affected by previous Roman construction, but so also was the commercial landscape of the town. The repercussions for such a decision may relate to Lucian's need to affiliate parts of his text with overtly classical descriptions to strengthen his later references to Rome.

4.2.2 Rebuilding and re-use of the Roman walls of Chester

The walls of Chester have had an impact upon the town's topography and perceptions of the city throughout its history. The Roman walls were initially built as a turf and timber rampart with timber towers at regular intervals, which was replaced soon after the fortress was fully

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[340] Faulkner tells us that Lucian's diagram is 'surprisingly accurate', but Robert W. Barrett Jnr asserts that Lucian's understanding of the city as 'the world made flesh' forces him to distort medieval depictions of Chester. This is no more obvious than in this particular example, where Lucian seems to grasp the orientation of the four Benedictine houses in relation to each other, but not the distances involved, nor a modern understanding of direction. Taylor. *Extracts from the Liber Lucian De Laude Cestrie,* 58-59.

[341] Charter 11, Geoffrey Barraclough. *Charters of the Anglo-Norman earls of Chester, c. 1071-1237*. (Chester: Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1988), 22-24.

established.[342] The stone defensive walls at Chester were an impressive and monumental creation, constructed out of large masonry blocks laid in regular courses with no bonding material. This is known as *opus quadratum*, a building style normally adopted around gates or approaching entrances to forts (Figure 48).[343] However it was rarely used for whole sections of military defences in this period, and shows that considerable effort and expense went into their construction.[344] The elaborate cornice (Figures 49 and 50) and coping stones in the wall would have required the expertise of masons to master the techniques involved in production.[345]

The use of *opus quadratum* and decorative stonework on the entire circuit of the wall is unusual and may have been built for "the demonstration of power and prestige thought architectural monumentality".[346] This can be likened to the way in which the Roman walls facing the river approach into York were impressively tall, and highly decorated with brick coursing. Charles LeQuesne points out that growing evidence of rendered and pointed walls at fortress sites may have made the *opus quadratum* less unique than first thought, because other fortress walls may have been finished to look like those built at Chester. He also draws parallels with civilian fortifications and teams of masons that moved between civilian and military sites. This could mean a variety of things. Either the fortress walls at Chester were designed to impress above the prevalent standard for military defensive circuits, or that Chester's use of *opus quadratum* may have represented a model upon which Roman fortress and urban town walls and were based. LeQuesne, It is not possible to dispute the immense scale and workmanship present, resulting in appeal to later generations and survival of the parts of the walls to the present day.

During Æthelflaed's early tenth-century refortification of the city walls, it is likely that the Roman walls were partly, if not mostly adapted or rebuilt using Roman material. This information comes from documentary evidence, but Thacker proposes that the Roman walls may have functioned as an inner defence, and then a later extension to the west and south walls may have formed an 'L-shaped' defensive area using the curve of the River Dee (see Figure 51 for the full

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[342] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 56.

[343] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagle*, 90.

[344] Concrete filled with rubble was a far more common building style for fortress walls in the Roman period, and the only other parallels we have for the adoption of coursed masonry in defensive walls at legionary fortresses are at Gloucester and Regensburg. Charles LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences: Investigations 1978-1990.* (Chester: Chester City Council, 1999), 149.

[345] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences*, 149.

[346] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 90; LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences*, 150.

circuit of the walls).[347] There is also evidence that a gravel path was laid inside the walls in the tenth century, which implies that the southern and western defences, which disappeared later, were intact during the Anglo-Saxon period.

The northern and eastern walls include considerable Roman masonry and almost the entirety of the Roman foundations. The insertion of Roman funerary monuments may have taken place during this phase of refurbishment.[348] Following the Conquest, the walls were fully built at their current circuit through the twelfth century and the south and west walls were heavily re-used in the construction of parish churches along their lengths. The exclusive use of stone in the Roman walls means that there would have been large supplies of building material from which later residents of the town could avail themselves. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Roman walls have been robbed in many places to foundation level and built over (Figure 52).[349] Indeed, the only surviving section of Roman stonework visible on the wall face lies to the east of Northgate above the canal.[350]

Visual inspection of the walls clearly demonstrates that they have a complex history of repairs and rebuilds (seen in Figures 53 and 54).[351] The north and east sections of the current city wall follow the exact lines of the Roman wall; and not only was the course of the Roman walls re-used in later periods, but much of the Roman stonework was re-used in successive repairs and rebuilding to the city walls (Figure 55).[352] While this can be difficult to identify *in-situ,* there are indicators such as the *opus quadratum* composition type, cornice and coping stones built into the walls, and the presence of Lewis holes (Figure 56), which tell us that it is reused Roman

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[347] This conforms to Anglo-Saxon suburban settlement patterns spreading from south of the city walls (but to the North of the Dee) back into the Roman settlement itself. Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 17- 18; Alldridge: *The topography of early medieval Chester*, 9-11.

[348] In the late nineteenth century, a cache of decorated Roman stonework including tombstones and architectural sculpture was discovered inside the north city wall. This masonry was inserted into the wall either during repairs in the early fourth century refortification of the town, or during repairs in the late ninth or early tenth century. LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences*,199.

[349] For a highly detailed analysis of the development of the Roman city walls, including later rebuilds and repairs, please see LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences*.

[350] A recent report undertaken by Chester City Council following the collapse of the city wall on St John's Street identified a section of Roman wall that lay under a succession of rebuilds, which is common for most areas of the wall. L.J. Dodd, *Essential repairs to a section of collapsed city wall, St John Street, Chester*: (Chester: Earthworks archaeology, 2009), 9.

[351] A great deal of rebuilding in the walls dates from the high and late medieval period, and in the nineteenth century the city took down the north wall and rebuilt it. The south and west section of the walls were almost entirely robbed during the late Anglo-Saxon and early medieval extensions to the walls. These now only show Roman masonry at foundation level. Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 200.

[352] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later* defences, 114.

masonry.[353] There are some visible Roman sections in the face of the north stretch of the wall, and a great deal of re-used masonry in the entirety of the existing wall. It is clear that the Roman city walls and later extension and refurbishment had a considerable impact upon the topography and development of Chester at all stages. It is from this early establishment of the city perimeters than a substantial amount of building stone was likely sourced for use in building projects during the Norman period.

4.2.3 The Roman *principia*, St Peter's at the Cross and the Holy See: "Upon this rock I will build my church."

The central Roman remains of Chester formed a lasting legacy within the town's material history, and impacted upon the construction of buildings and the composition of texts, which reflects attitudes towards Roman Chester and Rome itself, following the Conquest. The Roman headquarters building was located in the standard military position at the centre of the fortress, facing the main entrance to the fortress where the *via principia* joined the *via praetoria* (see Figure 57). This building measured 73 metres from east to west and between 95-105 metres from north to south – it would have been a monumental structure in the Roman urban landscape. Like most of the buildings in the fortress, there is evidence for an initial timber structure, later built in stone with several periods of restoration or renovation during the Roman period.[354] The *principia* conformed in general to a standard plan for such buildings, with a central courtyard flanked by a colonnaded portico leading to a series of rooms contained within. This courtyard would have served as a meeting place for assemblies and small parades.[355] To the rear of the complex was a basilica and administrative centre.[356] The back range was the most important part of the *principia*, because the central room was the location of the *aedes* or legionary shrine in which the eagle and standards were kept (Figure 58).[357]

Parts of the *principia* demonstrate a fairly low standard of workmanship, with large, roughly faced blocks and wide mortar joints in the southern range of the *principia* near to where St Peter's church now stands. Simon Ward has suggested that this may have been because this

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[353] Lewis holes were not strictly confined to the Roman period, but their use in medieval masonry is less common, and exposure of the hole by which the block was lifted tells us that the stone has been repositioned on its side. Tim Eaton, 'Identifying Roman *spolia'* in *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing, 2000), 139-148.

[354] Simon Ward, *Excavations at Chester, 12 Watergate Street 1985- Roman Headquarters building to Medieval Row*. (Chester: Chester City Council and the Grosvenor Museum, 1988), 15.

[355] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 61.

[356] Ward, *Excavations at Chester, 12 Watergate Street 1985*, 10.

[357] Ward, *Excavations at Chester, 12 Watergate Street 1985*, 10.

part of the fortress was destined for rendering and plastering.[358] This may have had later implications for the wall covering inside St Peter's church, where crude stonework, possibly taken from the Roman remains nearby was plastered. However, the basilica would have been an impressive building, designed for military ceremonies, addressing the officers of the fort, announcing imperial decrees and disciplinary hearings. Portable remains such as columns, bases and capitals excavated from the *principia* are visible in other parts of the city, (Figures 59-61). These demonstrate the monumental size of structural and decorative stonework from the *principia*, which may have been visible around the site when later medieval buildings were created over the top.[359] It is likely that the *principia* was built on a terrace to counter the slope southwards down to the river, which would have created a more imposing aspect from the southern approach.[360] This affected the street level of later buildings in the area, creating the highly conspicuous site choice for the later church of St Peter, which sits several feet above street level (Figure 62). The entrance to the *principia* would have been one of the most impressive in the fortress, and shows that the site was probably chosen for its central position and imposing approach through the main river gate of the city.

The majority of the *principia* building was probably removed before the tenth century; because in 907, when Æthelflaed founded the borough of Chester, she also founded the church of St Peter at the Cross over the south east corner of the *principia*. Ward proposes that the Roman roads to the east and west of the *principia* had also been removed at that time, with the eastern road becoming what is now Northgate Street.[361] In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the range of rooms on the northern side of the basilica were robbed to below ground level, in a similar process that which was seen at the fortress baths. The presence of the columns under 23 Northgate Street, lying *in situ* next to the column bases, suggests that these fell in a single collapse of the building and were not immediately removed. This implies that the building, despite its central location, may not have been as heavily occupied as one would expect. However, the site still impacted considerably in the development of the topography of the area.

Twelfth-century tradition dates the foundations of St Peter's at Chester to 907AD, and 1086 the church is referred to 'Templum Sancti Petri' in the Domesday Book.[362] While Simon Ward suggests that the *principia* had little impact upon the development of subsequent buildings,

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[358] Ward, *Excavations at Chester, 12 Watergate Street 1985*, 13.

[359] One example of this is at 12 Watergate Street, where evidence of a stone and timber structure from the medieval period was excavated in 1985. Ward, *Excavations at Chester, 12 Watergate Street 1985*.

[360] Ward, *Excavations at Chester, 12 Watergate Street 1985*, 14.

[361] Ward, *Excavations at Chester, 12 Watergate street 1985*, 28.

[362] Alldridge, 'Aspects of the topography of early medieval Chester': 6.

St Peter's fits clearly and neatly inside the south-east wing of the colonnaded area at the front of the of the building and demonstrates that some surviving parts of the Roman *principia* stood at least somewhat partially above ground level by the time. It is interesting to note that the main cathedral church of Chester, St Werberg's, does not occupy this central position over the *principia*, unlike other fortress sites such as York and Caerleon, as St Peter's was moved from the St Werberg's site in the early tenth century during its refoundation.[363] Clearly the Anglo-Saxon rededication recognised the importance of the current site, and moved the current primary church of the city here due to a desire to re-use the site of the Roman *principia*. The dedication to St Peter may have been a deliberate choice to evoke a further sense of *romanitas* as an offshoot of the main cathedral church*.

St Peter's at the Cross, a parish church, lies at the heart of Chester, but it is the city walls which Lucian uses to introduce his description of this building. He writes: "Ibi magnificus toti mundo, hic nobis murus a confinio maligno." [In that place there are magnificent walls which enclose all, here we exclude all evil], and then later discusses the walls of Rome as "High walls… with friends who honour God. They will not be able to jump over them there, nor here (at Chester) will they be able to treat them with contempt."[364] The city walls form an inherent part of Lucian's discussion of St Peter's, and the convenient starting point for Lucian's 'prolonged meditation on the city of Rome'.[365] The descriptions of St Peter's were among the most extensive of all of the four churches which Lucian mentions in *De Laude Cestrie*, and "they were certainly the most original and important".[366] Lucian tells us of the saint's 'special care' for the city and its inhabitants, and devotes several pages, not just to a description of Rome and the papacy, but a direct spatial comparison between the English city and Rome.[367] Lucian's audience may already have been familiar with this comparison through an understanding of Roman material remains around them.

"Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram edificabo ecclesiam meam."[368] [You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church], Lucian notes in his description of St Peter's in Chester. He links this to the elevated position over the Roman masonry of the *principia*, or the sandstone ridge chosen by the legions upon which St Peter's church stands. Here, Lucian grounds a universal

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[363] James Tait, 'Chartulary of Chester Abbey', *Remains historical and literary connected with the palatine counties of Lancashire and Cheshire.* (Manchester: New series, Chetham Society, 1920), p xvii.

[364] John Doran. 'Authority and Care: The Significance of Rome in Twelfth-Century Chester', *Roma Felix- Formations and Reflections of Medieval Rome,* edited by Eamonn O Carragain and Carol Neuman de Vegvar, (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 319.

[365] Doran. 'Authority and Care: The Significance of Rome in Twelfth-Century Chester', 319.

[366] Doran. 'Authority and Care: The Significance of Rome in Twelfth-Century Chester', 312.

[367] Fols 28-29v from Taylor, *Extracts from the Liber Lucian De Laude Cestrie,* 52.

[368] Taylor, *Extracts from the Liber Lucian De Laude Cestrie,* 51.

biblical theme in the local topographical landmarks of Chester, demonstrating to his readers that there was a significant parallel between Rome and their home town. Lucian then discusses at length the importance of the rock bearing the church of Peter at Rome, and Christ's significance as the strongest foundation. He further references the physical geography of the town when he mediates on the subject of Christ as the gate, and St Peter as the gatekeeper.[369] Using this metaphor for entrance into heaven, Lucian draws from a medieval understanding of fortifications, and the structures and institutions which contribute to their operation. City gates would have been a prominent feature in medieval towns, particularly at Chester with its full wall circuit. Lucian constructs a topographical schema with Christ at the centre of the town, with access overseen by Peter who controls the entrance to heaven. In this way, Lucian engages with descriptions of architecture and buildings, which he may have developed first-hand as a result of realistic observation. In doing so, Lucian may also be participating in a late-twelfth-century tradition, whereby descriptions of buildings and physical surrounds in literary accounts were becoming more prevalent and detailed and used physical mnemonics to convey theological topics.

St Peter's church was the original monastic church of Chester, and was moved to its current position in the centre of town when it was refounded by Ætheflaed. Another church was built on the site from which it was moved. This church was rededicated to St Werberg's; hence St Peter's had an important and special relationship with Lucian's own monastery. This relationship may account for the fact that Lucian devotes a significant portion the *De Laude Cestrie* to a comparison with St Peter's in Rome. The relocation of the church of St Peter's has repercussions for the study of the importance of the dedication to St Peter, as its position of primacy overlooking the river entrance to Chester, occupying a raised site previously held by the Roman headquarters, may have resonated with its dedication to St Peter at Rome. The consistent comparisons which Lucian, and possibly the citizens of Chester, make with Rome, show an understanding of many aspects of the eternal city, which were transposed upon their own immediate environment.

Lucian is perfectly aware of the Roman origins of the town when he tells us that: "Quae in occiduis Brittanie posita, legionibus ex longinquo venientibus receptoria quondam ad repausandum fuitet Romani sevans limitem imperii." [Placed in Western Britain, it was once a resting place for legions coming from afar and protecting the limits of the Roman Empire.][370] He acknowledges the seemingly well-known tradition which records the coming of the legions to Chester, but Lucian provides a more contemporary and figurative approach to the eternal city, preferring to meditate on figurative and allegorical representations of the town. Lucian creates a positive understanding of contemporary Rome, in opposition to other contemporary English

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[369] Taylor, *Extracts from the Liber Lucian De Laude Cestrie*, 53.

[370] Taylor, *Extracts from the Liber Lucian De Laude Cestrie,* 45.

accounts which were critical of the papacy and the curia. He relates this to an historical desire for primacy of the abbey, at a time when English monastic houses were seeking to assert their authority against what they saw was the corruption of the papal judicial process. Doran's excellent analysis of Lucian's portrayal of Rome demonstrates that Lucian intended to draw links between Chester and Rome in order to glorify the existence of both. The political ramifications of such a parallel would have been obvious to his audience, who may have been more sympathetic towards the papacy than contemporaries in other monastic houses or towns. Lucian grounds this particular discourse in an inherently urban-centric framework using highly allegorical material motifs.

Lucian discusses the roles of Romulus and Remus in comparison to Saints Peter and Paul. "Romulus raised Rome up to great dignity, constructed walls, built great palaces and erected monuments."[371] However Lucian posits that these monuments of Rome had crumbled to dust and that it was Peter's martyrdom, not the faded buildings of the pagan city, which was to glorify Rome. This attitude may explain why Lucian does not devote much of his text to a discussion of the buildings of Rome, similar to the way in which he does not discuss buildings, Roman or otherwise, at Chester. "Lucian's purpose was not to write a physical description of the city. His work is more of a commentary on the attributes of a city, both physical and spiritual".[372] It is not surprising then, that he should have chosen Rome as the only other city with which to compare Chester. It is the city of God, the saints, and the representatives of God on earth in the form of the papacy and curia. Medieval Rome and its spiritual importance were far more important to Lucian than any description of the Roman past. Doran remarks "He talks far more about St Peter, than he does about Caesar."[373] For Lucian, the pagan city was prestigious, but for less important reasons than those which secured the city's later fame. This ambivalence to the pagan city was not common among his contemporaries, who seemed more eager to condemn the contemporary Romans.[374] This sentiment is incredibly important when studying the re-use of Roman material culture, because, unlike other English authors, Lucian believes that it is not the ruined remains of Rome which create its legacy and primacy, but the foundation of the Holy Roman Church.

Lucian's text represents an alternative and enduring medieval way of re-using Rome. It is not simply a literary interpretation of this phenomenon, but it also engages with spatial representations within the text and the aspects of urban life and function which ground this text in the 'guidebook' genre. The tropological description of the town, as an interpretation of

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[371] Doran. 'Authority and Care: The Significance of Rome in Twelfth-Century Chester', 324.

[372] Doran. 'Authority and Care: The Significance of Rome in Twelfth-Century Chester', 310.

[373] Doran. 'Authority and Care: The Significance of Rome in Twelfth-Century Chester', 323.

[374] Doran. 'Authority and Care: The Significance of Rome in Twelfth-Century Chester', 320.

figurative meaning in the Bible (which several scholars have explained contains very little actual description), is instead a representation of the Roman church in the form of a geographical and spiritual visitor's guide. This fits with Keith Lilley's research upon the rectilinear and cross shaped forms chosen for more than their planning potential; instead conveying a whole corpus of anagogical meanings and parallels with the heavenly city of Jerusalem. Lilley notes that geometrical forms were laden with cultural symbolism, and it is interesting to note that Chester's adherence to the cruciform shape above other sites in Britain was outstanding, and partially explains the production of local literature which discusses this phenomenon.

Lilley draws parallels between the layout of Chester and Lucian's description, with Robert Ricart's fifteenth century map of Bristol, often reflected elsewhere in cruciform plans of churches.[375] Crosses and rectilinear shapes, modelled on the underlying Roman remains, obviously carried additional references to multiple forms of *romanitas. De Laude Cestrie* is one of the first itinerary texts produced for local readers, pre-dated only by William Fitz Stephen's description of London,[376] and links the temporal city with an overarching spiritual meaning. The inherent relationship between use of space at Chester and the legacy of the Roman church form the basis for this entire text. This demonstrates a highly unique, but nonetheless potent, example of how Rome, its church and local topography could be textually linked during the High Middle Ages.

The current church fabric of St Peter's dates from the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but a source from 1947 claims that the church contains material from the Roman fortress headquarters.[377] No comprehensive study has been undertaken on the interior fabric at St Peter's, but examination of the south and east interior walls reveals that there is a mixture of roughly faced stonework, demonstrating a variety of sources, or at least different periods of repair (Figure 63). The varied nature of stonework inside St Peter's could also indicate that some of it may have been sourced from the rough stonework of the *principia*, considering that the tooling marks consist of long diagonal uniform adze marks, short irregular adze marks and other irregular gouging. It may also simply indicate that the inside of St Peter's was destined for a plaster coating, however, given the proximity to the principia and the removal of most of the stonework during the tenth and eleventh centuries, it is highly likely that the parish church of St Peter did indeed contain stonework salvaged from the Roman headquarters building. All occupation following the refoundation of St Peter's deemed the site important- for its centrality, its height above street level, and its position for the salvaging of masonry.

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[375] Keith D. Lilley, *City and Cosmos: The Medieval World in Urban Form*, (London: Reaktion Books), 2009.

[376] Stenton, *Norman London: an essay; with a translation of William Fitz Stephen's description*.

[377] Raymond Richards, *Old Cheshire Churches*, (London: Batsford, 1947), 121–126.

Different types of tooling on salvaged stonework at Chester and the other case-study sites may have simply provided a convenient surface for plastering, or it may have been intended to convey an association with Roman remains salvaged from a variety of sources. The assemblage of multiple different types of tooling, and little uniformity in re-used stonework set together in a new context may imply a connection to different salvage sites and hence different Roman institutions. The kudos provided by different ruins, mixed in with freshly quarried Norman stonework, would have conveyed a powerful sense of authority, and the stone itself conveyed permanence associated with both the Anglo-Saxon church and Roman architecture. The colour of the sandstone in Chester remains uniform, indicating that the stone was not sourced further afield than the local environment, however the disparate nature of tooling can contribute to our understanding of meaningful re-use, because although all sourced locally, it is quite likely sourced from different sites.

4.2.4 Re-imagining the town: Twelfth-century traditions of realistic observation

Despite the comparative lateness of this work to Lucian, the sixteenth-century *Life of St Werberg*, contains considerable information on twelfth-century Chester. This text was composed by a monk at the abbey of St Werberg c 1513, at a time when the jurisdiction and the prestige of St Werberg's were diminishing.[378] Concerned solely with a model of the city's patron saint, this text develops an urban topographical framework in a similar manner to Lucian's *De Laude Cestrie*.[379] The *Life* draws upon a range of sources, including the twelfth-century Gerald of Wales, Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury.[380] These sources are particularly important when we consider Bradshaw's description of the town's origins and foundation as they too were part of the twelfth-century intellectual revival which began to place an emphasis on material culture. The *Life* contains a model of the city, with the shrine of the saint at its heart; and provides a fairly comprehensive background into the life of St Werburg – her death, translation, and miracles in the city of Chester. The work is divided into two books, and it is the second which is of the most interest for this case study, as it covers the role of the saint within the town. In it Bradshaw gives a

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[378] Catherine Clarke, 'Remembering Anglo-Saxon Mercia in late medieval and early modern Chester' in *Mapping the Medieval City: Space, Place and Identity in Chester c 1200-1600.* University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2011, 203; discusses this situation in more detail.

[379] Despite sharing similar themes with Lucian's text -- namely the promotion of religious life in the city through descriptions of urban topography -- Bradshaw does not mention Lucian by name, and may have never known Lucian's text. Both men were monks at St Werberg's abbey, but Bradshaw takes care to mention many of his sources, and he does not do so with the *De Laude Cestrie.* The only strikingly similar content shared by Bradshaw and Lucian is their account of the fire in the city in 1180. Lucian, *Extracts from the MS. Liber Luciani : de laude Cestrie,* 2.

[380] Clarke, 'The Text', accessed 24th February 2012.

description of the foundation and history of the town, replete with descriptions of the urban landscape.[381] At all points Bradshaw concerns himself with the role of the saint within the city, and like Lucian's text, this is invariably associated with a physical sense of place and material identity. It is also clear that some of Bradshaw's architectural descriptions derive from Ranulph Higden's text, which Bradshaw mentions by name in his description of the city:

386   Ranulphus in his cronicle yet doth expresse

387   The cite of Chestre edified for to be

388   By the noble romans prudence and richesse

389   Whan a legion of knyghtes was sende to the cite,

390   Rather than by the wysdome of Britons or policie;

391   Obiectyng clere agaynst the britons fundacion,

392   Whiche auctour resteth in his owne opinion.

400   This 'cite of legions,' so called by the Romans,

401   Nowe is nominat in latine of his proprete

402   Cestria quasi castria / of honour and pleasance:

403   Proued by the buyldynge of olde antiquite.[382]

It is interesting that Bradshaw himself believes that the city was founded by the Britons, but he also reproduces the standard perception propagated by twelfth-century texts that Chester was founded by the Romans. He talks of Romans, legions and 'the cite of the legions', and it is clear from this that the foundation of the town was understood locally to have been carried out by the Romans throughout the medieval period – it is this version of history which is perpetuated in texts on the city up until the sixteenth century. Importantly, Bradshaw supports these statements with the "proof" of standing material remains in the city – a 'buyldynge of olde antiquite'. He derives authority from the ruins of the Roman town to substantiate his early account of the town's history. These visible remains would have been all but destroyed by Bradshaw's day, which might explain why his description of the ruins seems to derive solely from Higden:

404   In cellers and lowe voultes / and halles of realte

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[381] Catherine Clarke. 'The Text' in *Henry Bradshaw, Life of St Werberg* in the' Mapping medieval Chester' digital project, http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk/texts/facing/Lucian.html?page=0, accessed 24th February 2012.

[382] Henry Bradshaw. *The Life of Saint Werburge of Chester*, edited by Carl Horstmann, (London: The Early English Text Society. 1992), Book II, Lines 386-403.

405   Lyke a comly castell / myghty, stronge and sure,

406   Eche house like a toure, somtyme of great pleasure.[383]

Note the similarities with Higden's 'underground passages' and 'low vaults'; but Bradshaw takes further license when imagining what may have existed above ground as a mighty, comely castle, with each house like a tower. This process of 're-imagining' takes escalating license throughout the Middle Ages, culminating in a fabrication similar to the late twelfth-century re-imagining of Gerald of Wales with his 'lofty towers, gilded gables, and mighty palaces' at the military fortifications of Caerleon. Not content with sparse and limited references to material remains in earlier descriptions of the town, authors such as Higden and Bradshaw felt that it was necessary to create a historical fiction which encompassed highly embellished aspects of material culture.

Book II also makes use of what Bradshaw describes as a 'third passionarye':

1690   To expresse all myracles written in the place

1691   In a boke nominate the thrid passionarye.[384]

This passionary "seems to have been a compilation of various different hagiographic and miracle texts relating to Werberg and her association with Chester".[385] While we do not have an extant copy of this text in its entirety, Rosalind Love identifies it as a four volume legendary composed at St Werberg's in the early twelfth-century.[386] Thacker posits that this "corpus of miracle stories was probably put together in the later twelfth-century: it comprised wonders associated with the canons of the old minster and the monks of the new abbey, extending… from the reign of Edward the Elder, to 1180".[387] Part of this collection included Goscelin of Saint-Bertin's Life of St Werburg, which may have been in a section of the legendary. It is clear then, that this sixteenth century text drew upon a wide range of sources available to the monastic community of St Werberg. This quantity of literature constitutes a thriving twelfth-century interest in the history of the town and its foremost saint, and also links the primacy of the town with its Roman origins.

According to the seventeenth-century historian, Anthony Wood, Bradshaw also composed a treatise on the history of Chester. This text, *De antiquitate et magnificentia urbis Cestriae chronicon* has no extant copy, and no additional evidence to support its existence.[388] It is, however, highly important to consider this text in light of Bradshaw's other composition and his use of

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[383] Henry Bradshaw. *The Life of Saint Werburge of Chester*, Book II, Lines 404-406.

[384] Henry Bradshaw. *The Life of Saint Werburge of Chester*, Book II, Lines 1690-1691.

[385] Clarke. 'The Text', accessed 24th February 2012.

[386] Clarke. 'The Text', accessed 24th February 2012.

[387] Thacker. 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33.

[388] Clarke. 'The Author', accessed 24th February 2012.

previous descriptions of the town, including the 'third passionarye'. Bradshaw clearly had an interest in the material remains and physical environment of the city of Chester, which had been developed by previous medieval authors into a mature literary *topos.* Bradshaw's sources mainly derive from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and develop an interest and a promotion of Chester's material culture. This affiliation with the Roman remains of the town was often used in the following centuries to assert political and individual authority. The connection was appropriated by both of the major religious houses to justify their own existence, and the primacy of the town in the Anglo-Norman political and social milieu. Bradshaw's *Life of Werburg* is a lengthy and highly descriptive account of the town's history, drawing from a range of sources which complement and extend his aims. This suggests a full engagement with all aspects of the town's history and material past, whereby the development of texts which discuss and promote Roman material culture over the preceding centuries had come to fruition.

4.2.5 Local parish churches and the importance of topography

All of Chester's parish churches demonstrate the re-use of Roman material culture. Many were Saxon or Scandinavian foundations, but most were rebuilt during the Norman period, and all were influenced by Roman settlement in all periods. The map series of the Mapping Medieval Chester project clearly show the development of medieval Chester based on the Roman street plan, and from this we can see how the choice of site for many parish churches was dictated by Roman topography. Considering that most of the parish churches were built over (in part or whole adhering to the underlying plan) or next to important Roman buildings, the choice of site was also enhanced by access to ready building material in later periods, and may have been a meaningful selection of prominent historical sites. Although building material does not survive in many of the churches, there is evidence that a significant amount of this building material was salvaged from the sites upon which churches were built, or at the very least, from close by. Many of the parish churches demonstrate a pre-Conquest engagement with Roman past, and this is perpetuated and amplified with the construction of larger Norman churches in the twelfth century.

The parish churches of St Michael's and St Bridget's were located near or over the towers of the Roman south gate – the main gate on the approach into the fort from the river. St Michael's sits where the Roman east tower would have been, and St Bridget's sat on the opposite side of the *via principia* where the western tower of the gate would have flanked the street (see figure 96). Traces of cement foundations have been found in excavations on Bridge Street running under St Michael's church, with a minimum area of 5.85m by 5.1m.[389] There are corresponding foundations

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[389] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences,* 107.

under the opposite side of the street which would presumably have supported the church of St Bridget. LeQuesne points out that these foundations indicate a gate larger than any other known Roman military gate in Britain – at least a third larger than any other main fortress gates.[390] As the primary entrance into the fort, this gate would most likely have been impressive, considering the effort which went into the creation and decoration and monumental walls. It may be that the towers of the south gate survived relatively intact until the churches we constructed over the top of them, considering that the roadway still followed this pattern through the gate well into the twelfth-century.[391]

No parts of the early or high medieval churches of St Michael's or St Bridget's survive, though we do know that these churches were in existence by the end of the twelfth century (as they were burnt down in the fire of 1188).[392] It is likely that St Bridget's was built first, prior to the Conquest, considering that a dedication to St Bridget was appropriate for the Hiberno-Norse community of the tenth century[393]. The parish areas of St Bridget's and the other Anglo-Scandinavian foundation of St Olave's to the south are both considerably smaller than the others in the town, and this may be because St Bridget's was encroached upon by the post-Conquest parish of St Mary's (please see figure 96 for a plan of the parish boundaries in the middle ages).[394] Today on the site of St Michael's church stands the fifteenth-century church, which had extensive renovations in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.[395] The dedication to St Michael suggests an immediately pre-Conquest date, or a foundation following the Conquest, but it not known precisely. This current church rests several feet above street level, in a similar fashion to St Peter's (Figure 97), presumably because it rests over Roman foundations.[396]

The remains of several sections of wall and some arches recovered from the medieval church of St Michael are on display at the southern side of the Grosvenor Gardens. It is possible to see the western entrance arch and surrounding wall (Figure 98); a larger Romanesque arch, presumably from the transept of a crossing tower (Figure 99); and a section of later wall inset with gothic arches. There is no surviving evidence for what Norman St Michael's may have looked like, but if it were a sizeable church, it most likely had a central crossing tower. All of the

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[390] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences,* 107.

[391] Alldridge, 'The topography of early medieval Chester': 17.

[392] C. P. Lewis and A. T. Thacker. 'Medieval religious houses', *A History of the County of Chester: Volume 5* (2003): 16-33.

[393] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 17.

[394] Alldridge, 'The topography of early medieval Chester': 17-21.

[395] 'St Michael's church and Heritage Centre, Chester'. English Heritage list entry. http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1376107, accessed 14th September 2011.

[396] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 27.

stonework from St Michael's is of the same red sandstone seen at many of the Roman and medieval buildings within the city. The block size and shape closely resembles those found at St John's, indicating that parish churches in Chester may have partly derived inspiration from the larger churches in the city. It may also indicate that the Romanesque St Michael's sourced its stonework from the masonry of the gate tower or amphitheatre, in the way that the builders of St John's used building stone from the nearby Roman amphitheatre. In conclusion, St Michael's and St Bridget's therefore utilised sites established in the Roman period, and there is evidence to suggest that St Michael's may be built on top of Roman foundations or rubble, and may also have re-used masonry from the Roman towers in the twelfth-century church.

St Olave's parish church was built outside the Roman fortress, in an area close to St John's that was populated in the Anglo-Saxon period. Its position on Lower Bridge Street would have been along the route to the civilian *vicus* attached to the fort, and this may have influenced its choice of site. St Olave's was most likely built during the reign of King Canute in Chester, because of its dedication to St Olaf who was martyred in 1030. The dedication compares with St Olave's in York which was founded circa 1050, which means that the Chester church must date to the very end of the Anglo-Saxon period.[397] Like St Bridget's nearby, St Olave's parish boundary is relatively small compared to others in the town, which suggests that the Norman St Mary's encroached upon the parish territory (Figure 96). Some of the existing fabric of St Olave's resembles that of the Romanesque church of St Michael (see Figure 100), which indicates that it may have been rebuilt during the Norman period out of masonry salvaged from either the walls, the southern gate, or the Roman amphitheatre.

St Martin's parish church was established relatively late in the Anglo-Saxon period, in the south west corner of the Roman walls. Unlike Holy Trinity, St Michael's and St Bridget's, St Martin's was not built over a gate but a Roman corner tower. Nothing survives above ground of this church (a modern car park has been built on the site), but we know that it was established by 1150.[398] The corresponding south-eastern Roman corner tower was excavated in the 1930s and this may give us some idea as to the original size and plan of the south western tower (see Figure 101).[399] Though it is not known from what St Martin's was built and there has been no excavation to determine its foundations, it is the only parish church in any of the case studies to be built over or in a Roman tower. As a corner tower in the elaborately corniced city walls, this building would have provided impressive remains which may have survived into the late-Saxon period.

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[397] Ward et al., *Excavations at Chester. Saxon Occupation within the Roman Fortress*. 121.

[398] 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', A History of the County of Chester: Volume 5 part 1: The City of Chester: General History and Topography (2003), 16-33. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=19184 Date accessed: 05 August 2011.

[399] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences*, 7.

Holy Trinity church is located over the site of the west gate of the Roman fortress. Compared to the east gate (which was taller and wider than usual fortress gates) this was probably a relatively modest entrance leading down to the Roman harbour. [400] Unfortunately, no traces of the west gate have been found, but the position of Holy Trinity is no coincidence, as gate towers were frequently re-used to house non-domestic buildings in the early medieval period. Nothing survives of the medieval church, because it was completely rebuilt in 1865-1869 on the site of the medieval parish church.[401] However it would have been in existence by the end of the twelfth century.[402] As the western Roman wall would have stood to some height by this point, mainly disappearing by the end of the twelfth-century, the wall and possibly the nearby Watergate baths would have been a source of building stone. Because the church no longer stands, it is not possible to conclude anything about the twelfth-century fabric, apart from the fact it may have re-used material like other parish churches which were built almost entirely over, and adhering to the underlying structure, of Roman gates. Holy Trinity fits into the series of medieval churches at Chester which appropriated Roman topography and site choice over the top of gates and important buildings.

St-Mary-on-the-Hill was established in the early post-Conquest period as a foundation to serve the parish area surrounding the Norman castle, which also extended further south with a large extra-mural parish. This church was closely associated with the Norman earls and was the only parish church in Chester to hold burial rights. It also attracted bequests from eminent citizens, several of whom were buried there.[403] It was relatively wealthy throughout the Middle Ages, and repelled attempts to appropriate its holdings by the monks of St Werberg's. Its wealth and association with the castle made it an important parish church, and it is mentioned several times in the charters of the Anglo-Norman earls. The church of St Mary's does not follow the established pattern for parish churches over important Roman sites, and this is no doubt linked to its role as the primary church for the castle. Despite this, and in a similar fashion to the nearby Agricola Tower, it is possible that the church of St Mary's re-used Roman material from either the walls or other important Roman buildings in the area. A Roman *mansio* discovered in 1979 near the site of St Mary's was completely robbed, and may have been a source of building material, but this was levelled in the fourth century AD and probably did not provide much masonry by the

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[400] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences,* 104.

[401] 'Guildhall and Holy Trinity Church, Chester'. English Heritage List entry http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1376467, accessed 19th September 2011.

[402] Lewis and Thacker calculate that all nine of Chester's parish churches were fully established by 1150. 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33.

C. P. Lewis and A. T. Thacker. 'Medieval religious houses', *A History of the County of Chester: Volume 5* (2003): 16-33.

medieval period. However, an adjacent bath house, discovered in the seventeenth century may have provided some material for the Norman St Mary's.[404]

Despite the extended circuit of the Anglo-Saxon walls, the south and west Roman walls would have mainly stood until the twelfth century when Chester's parish churches were constructed.[405] This means that the visual impact of the walls, gates, corner towers and interval towers may have dictated the choice of site for parish churches well into the high middle ages, as virtually all of the parish churches in Chester were located over or within parts of the Roman defensive circuit. For earlier foundations, evidence from St John's suggests that Anglo-Saxon chapels were possibly incorporated into the actual Roman structure, and this practice may have occurred for all of the Anglo-Saxon parochial foundations.[406] This level of re-use would not have been a casual adoption of a strategic site, or even simply a convenient source of building stone, especially when we consider the choice of site for St Michael's and St Bridget's. These churches were located on the very edge of their parish areas, right next to each other, which made less sense in the context of their parish boundaries.

There is only one explanation – the sites were chosen for their meaningful proximity to the Roman south gate. As all but two of the parish churches in Chester were built over prominent Roman sites, Roman buildings not only provided useful sources of building stone, but also convenient topographical sites imbued with connotations of *romanitas* upon which to build later Christian churches. There was a strong drive for the foundation of pre-Conquest parochial chapels over such sites at Chester; which, when considered as a whole, suggests a meaningful desire to claim aspects of their perceived authority or longevity. Smaller churches, even prior to the establishment of parochial authority, were considered part of a spiritual legacy of Rome. This suggests an engagement with the Roman material record at least a hundred years before the composition of Lucian explicitly asserted the primacy of the Roman church.

4.3. Monasteries and re-use: negotiating transition

4.3.1 The Roman amphitheatre and the Augustinian church of St John's

There is a continued, historical relationship between the Roman amphitheatre at Chester and the Romanesque church dedicated to St John the Baptist, which was built nearby in the Norman

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[404] David Mason, 'Chester: The Canabae Legionis', *Britannia*, Volume 18 (1987): 150.

[405] Thacker, Alan. 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 17. Le Quesne. *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences.* 147, and Alldridge, 'The topography of early medieval Chester': p 6.

[406] D.F. Petch, 'The Roman period', *A History of the County of Cheshire, Victoria History of the counties of England* edited by Harris and Thacker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 130.

period. Part of the amphitheatre at Chester was used as an early Saxon chapel, and in the twelfth century, this developed into a separate religious precinct focussed around the site of the amphitheatre from which the Romanesque church appropriated building material. This section will demonstrate that the legacy of the town's Roman material culture and a recorded historical tradition of an early religious foundation resulted in the continued occupation of the site to the present day. The organic growth of the St John's precinct within and near the Roman amphitheatre affected the choice of building materials used in the later settlement and also affected the geographical layout of its surrounds. This may have related to the amphitheatre providing a convenient place of defence or source of building stone, or a meaningful and conscious desire on the part of later occupants to be near an established Roman site. Throughout the site's history, the inhabitants of the area utilised the amphitheatre and the archaeological legacy that it provided in order to negotiate the Christianisation of the area, as well as significant political, social and religious upheaval in the town. This was a process of continuity and also a process of transition, where the use of space was renegotiated, and the secular nature of the amphitheatre was slowly transformed into an enduring religious precinct where its physical material became part of the legacy of Rome.

The site of the amphitheatre lies outside the fortress walls near the south-east corner of the fortress, with the western end of St John's church nearly touching above the eastern side of the amphitheatre (see Figures 64 and Figure 65). The first amphitheatre, or *ludus* built on the site was constructed in c100 AD with stone inner and outer walls containing an earth seating bank (Figure 66).[407] It measured 95.7 x 82.2 metres and was capable of holding an entire legion for the purpose of weapons training; military parades; performances by professional gladiators and wrestlers; religious rites and festivals associated with the military cult; as well as wild beast fights, duels and public executions.[408] The Roman amphitheatre at Chester is one of several in Britain, with others located at Caerleon in south east Wales and in London. It was first discovered in 1929 by W.J. Williams of the Chester Archaeological Society while he was undertaking building works in the area.[409] It has had a fairly sparse excavation history, with F.H. Thompson clearing the northern half of the amphitheatre by machine excavation from 1965-1969.[410] The amphitheatre underwent

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[407] Tony Wilmott, Dan Garner, Stewart Ainsworth, 'The Roman amphitheatre at Chester: an interim account'. *English Heritage Historical Review*, Volume 1, (2006): 10.

[408] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 106.

[409] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 107.

[410] Following this, there have been a series of non-invasive small scale investigations carried out by Oxford Archaeology, Chester Archaeology, the Chester City Council and English Heritage, though the majority of findings from these excavations have not yet been published, though preliminary finding from these studies have shed new light on the various phases of the amphitheatre's construction, as well as other structures associated with the amphitheatre. Wilmott, Garner, Ainsworth, 'The Roman amphitheatre at Chester: an interim account': 7, 23.

several periods of renovation which left it with walls that were nearly two metres thick and twelve metres high, and a grandiose decorative scheme in the form of large half columns or decorative buttresses on the outer walls (of which only the foundations stones have been found).[411]

Chester's amphitheatre was a substantial and monumental structure, providing a huge supply of building resources from which to salvage. As the walls have been robbed to well below ground level in some areas, and the inner wall, or *cavea* does not stand to a height of more than two metres at any one point, a very large amount of available masonry has been removed from the site for use in later building (Figure 67). The stonework in the amphitheatre was of a very high standard, with neatly finished *petit appareil* blocks on the internal and external facing of the walls of the chronologically later amphitheatre.[412] This may have made it a very usable and attractive masonry stockpile for any post-Roman builder. The masonry around the entrances to the amphitheatre was also of monumental size (Figure 68), so the upper levels of these walls would have been a useful find for those considering later re-use.

In the *nemesia*, a small room next to the northern entrance containing a shrine to Nemesis *in situ*, the stonework is made up of larger blocks. Traces of plaster and paint mean that this room would have had an internal covering and decoration (see Figure 69). Gladiators, or soldiers and criminals facing trial by combat or settling private grudge disputes would have made offerings to Nemesis before entering the arena, and the invocation of the pagan god may have continued into the late Roman period. The presence of the *nemeseum* problematises the transitional nature of the secular/sacred dichotomy, because part of the amphitheatre was already used as a pagan religious space even during the Roman period. The masonry in the *nemesia* and around each of the visible entrances has been tooled with a variety of tooling patterns, mainly diagonal cross hatching, but in some cases, rough gouging from a fine chisel, in preparation for plaster. Yet the *petit appareil* around the *cavea* does not show signs of tooling, only weathering (see Figure 70). This suggests that areas of the amphitheatre, especially internal ones, may have been plastered, while those exposed to the elements were simply finished with neat coursed masonry. This may have provided contrasting finishing techniques for anyone wishing to emulate building styles or techniques in the amphitheatre at a later date.

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[411] The beam slot pattern left by this seating was initially identified by Thompson and Mason as being an earlier timber framed amphitheatre. Wilmott, Garner, Ainsworth, 'The Roman amphitheatre at Chester: an interim account': 9-11: Mason, 'Chester: The Canabae Legionis': 151: Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 94-95, 144.

[412] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 143.

In the late Roman period, the east entrance of the amphitheatre, and possibly the south and west entrances were blocked, leaving the north entrance as the only accessible entry point.[413] Excavations have dated a series of timber buildings within the amphitheatre from the end of the Roman period through to the eleventh century using analysis of timber post holes and pits.[414] These modifications to the entrances and evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation suggest that the amphitheatre was used as a high status defensive structure by a local warlord during this period. A series of roughly worn stone steps lead from the south side of the east gate up to what has been proposed as a Roman officers' box, which currently terminate at around ground level (Figures 71). Archaeologists working on the latest series of excavations propose that this entrance may have been converted for use as the crypt in the original church of St John, now situated nearby. The wear on the treads of the steps indicate centuries of use, implying that the eastern gate had been in almost continuous use via these steps from the end of the Roman period.

One would think that when choosing the site for an early Anglo-Saxon chapel within the amphitheatre, the pre-fabricated room of the *nemeseum* would have provided an appropriate space; in terms of the re-use of religious space seen in other examples around England. However, the altar in the shrine to Nemesis was discovered *in situ* during excavation, so the pagan origins of the *nemeseum* may not have been known to later inhabitants, which is why it was not used to house an early Anglo-Saxon chapel. This may also relate, in part, to practical considerations in the fortification of the amphitheatre during the Anglo-Saxon period. The chapel was possibly built in the east entrance to the amphitheatre, which had been blocked up at some point, while the north entrance was left open. Not only was the choice of the easternmost gate of spiritual significance (facing Jerusalem and hence the coming of Christ), but it also allowed for the most convenient access to the town of Chester to be left open to the north. Hence, the pagan *nemeseum* was not considered adequate to house the earliest chapel of St John, for both practical and religious reasons. If the original function of the room had been known to later medieval inhabitants, it is not known whether they would have chosen to use it, because of its pagan connotations. Clearly the re-use of pagan religious sites was sometimes avoided by later medieval occupants, indicating that site re-use cannot always be explained by religious significance.

The doorway from the east entrance into the amphitheatre was also modified on at least two occasions, with two rows of decorative columns added to each side of the entrance.[415] This supports evidence that the east gate housed a fairly prestigious building in the early Anglo-Saxon period. A tradition recorded in the thirteenth century *Annales Cestriensis*, produced by Monks at St

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[413] Wilmott, Garner, Ainsworth, 'The Roman amphitheatre at Chester: an interim account': 12.

[414] Wilmott, Garner, Ainsworth, 'The Roman amphitheatre at Chester: an interim account': 13.

[415] Wilmott, Garner, Ainsworth, 'The Roman amphitheatre at Chester: an interim account': 12.

Werberg's states that Æthelred, king of the Mercians, founded a church of St John in 689 in the suburbs of Chester. [416]   Despite the fact that this source is centuries after the purported foundation date, it corroborates the archaeological evidence of a church in the vicinity of the amphitheatre. Gildas, writing in the sixth century, then reiterated by Bede, also documents the martyrdom of two early Christian saints, Aaron and Julius, at "the City of the Legions" which is another name for Chester. These sources may have created an early convention of associating Christian martyrdoms with Chester, and therefore its amphitheatre and potentially an early chapel. There was clearly a meaningful desire to be near such an obviously Roman site.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, continuity was maintained on the site, as the area became a separate borough known as bishop's borough or 'Redcliffe'. The community was its own detached enclave away from the town, and archaeologists suggest that it was fortified with a ditch running down Souter's lane and the western side of the amphitheatre. In this way, the amphitheatre became incorporated into the new topography developing at the site. The main religious building of St John's was probably moved out of the amphitheatre and re-established nearby during the late Anglo-Saxon period. In the 1050s, according to John of Worcester's Chronicle, St John's received a significant endowment along with St Werberg's from the Earl Leofric.[417] At this point the church was fairly prosperous, with a dean and seven canons. Despite running a smaller ecclesiastical area than the competing church of St Werberg's, in 1075, following the Conquest and the appointment of Norman earls, the church was made the seat of the north-west Mercian see under Bishop Peter.[418] The occupation of the amphitheatre area by the Bishop's borough demonstrates a form of topographical continuity in competition with the town. Despite the rapid political and social changes that occurred at Chester in the late Anglo-Saxon period, the early foundation of a church within the walls of the amphitheatre resulted in the creation of a sacred space which maintained its identity into the Norman period showing that the re-use of Roman material culture was expressed in a variety of ways.

The existing church of St John's occupies an extramural site to the south-east side of the town, in close proximity to the Roman amphitheatre (see Figure for a view across the amphitheatre to St John's). Work on the church progressed very slowly, and it wasn't until the

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[416] Wilmott, Garner, Ainsworth, 'The Roman amphitheatre at Chester: an interim account': 13. Alldridge tells us there is no need to dispute this date. Alldridge, 'Aspects of the topography of early medieval Chester': 9.

[417] John of Worcester, *Chronicle,* edited by R.R. Darlington and P McGurk, (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts, 1995), 582-583.

[418] The reason for this relocation from Lichfield was that Chester was becoming a more prosperous and prominent town, and the bishop already owned a great deal of property in Chester. However, in the late eleventh century, his successor Robert de Limesey moved the seat again to Coventry, which was confirmed in a papal bull by 1102. St John's continued to act as a mother church for the north of the see, even after the see was later moved back to Lichfield. Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings' 23; Gem, 'Romanesque Architecture in Chester c. 1075-1117', 32.

early thirteenth century that the nave and its thirteenth century clerestory were finished. Despite its relative poverty compared to the neighbouring church of St Werberg's, St John's maintained a fairly thriving church precinct throughout the twelfth-century. This contained the Minster of St Mary's, the separate chapel of St James, a hermitage, and residences for the bishop and archdeacon.[419] The current church contains many surviving elements from the twelfth century and these have been partially documented.[420] The arcades of the choir, transepts, and arcades of the east and west end either side of the crossing date to the late eleventh-/ early twelfth century (Figure 73).[421] The next phase of building, in the second half of the twelft century, completed the west side of the crossing and down the main arcades of the nave. Finally the triforium and clerestory were finished in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (Figure 74).[422] St John's was planned according to a cruciform design, with flanking aisles and an apse at the eastern end, with two apsidal flanking chapels at the ends of the aisles (Figure 75). In the sixteenth century, the eastern arm of the church was walled off and left to ruin when St John's was converted from a collegiate institution into a parish church.

The church of St John's had a large tower at the west end of the church which collapsed in 1881, causing a great deal of damage to that end of the church.[423] The central tower of the church collapsed in 1468, and again in 1572. At some point, presumably after 1547, the transepts were also removed.[424] The remains of the former eastern arm lie outside the church, and are badly weathered due to exposure to the elements. The eastern arm shows evidence of later medieval and possibly post medieval alterations (best seen in Figure 76), though it is likely that material from the Romanesque parts of the eastern end may have been used in these alterations, and may still be visible. Certainly there appear to be a fairly uniform block size and shape of masonry in some parts of this end of the church. The wall to the right of the eastern apse (Figure 77) also demonstrates the complex phasing of the church, and this appears particularly problematic to

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[419] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings' 24.

[420] There are as yet no publications that record the ruins at the east end of the church. The British Archaeological Association conference at Chester in 1992 called for a survey to be undertaken, which was carried out following the conference, but so far no published report has been released (though Richard Gem and Simon Ward provide a fairly extensive preliminary evaluation of the building phasing). Simon Ward, 'Recent work at St John's and St Werberg's' *Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture at Chester,* (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2000),45-56; Gem, 'Romanesque Architecture in Chester c. 1075-1117', 38.

[421] Gem, 'Romanesque Architecture in Chester c. 1075-1117', 38.

[422] Gem, 'Romanesque Architecture in Chester c. 1075-1117', p 39. Personal correspondence with Jonathon Coley reveals that the latest survey of St John's revealed that the building may have been completed in one building phase, and that the clerestory may date from the twelfth-century.

[423] Ward, 'Recent work at St John's and St Werberg's', 45.

[424] Ron Baxter, 'St John the Baptist, Chester, Cheshire' in *The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, 2008, http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/ed-ch-chsjb.html, accessed 23rd August 2011.

survey. Simon Ward suggests that the stairwell in the south eastern wall of the main body of the church, still visible today may have been used to access the eastern towers of the church.

Where the end of the church would have terminated against the east wall (Figure 78), it is still possible to see elements of Romanesque architecture, including blind arches, columns, and Romanesque sculptural detailing (Figure 79). In the left side of the eastern-most arch of the apse is a visible Lewis hole, nearly halfway up the edge of the arch. This has been repositioned on its side. If this ashlar block were manufactured in the medieval period, it was still rotated so that the hole faces outwards, suggesting that the Romanesque church of St John was constructed out of Roman stonework (Figure 80). Like the east end, the masonry which forms the south aisle wall of St John's is badly worn, but the block size and shape is compatible with the stonework in the east end. The mortar too is the same greyish shade and composition, indicating that the stone from this part of the church may have derived from the same source; considering the size and shape, this may well have been the nearby amphitheatre.

It is not possible to identify the re-use of Roman stonework on the interior of the building at St John's because the high quality tooling finish on the walls and nave columns has removed all traces of Roman tooling. Additionally, there are many parallels between the masonry in the amphitheatre and St John's. But as there was only one type of local building stone and potentially several phases of re-use in the town which utilises masonry of this type, it is not possible to tell accurately from the state of the masonry alone if re-use has occurred. However, in the stonework visible in the exterior of St John's block size roughly compares to that taken from the Roman amphitheatre. In addition to this, the facing stones are tooled in a similar manner, and have similar weathering patterns. The internal wall of the amphitheatre features larger blocks of worked stone placed against an internal rubble core, which is a construction method used also in the church (Figure 81). However, the proximity of St John's to the amphitheatre and the sheer volume of stone which has been removed from it; the fact that the earliest church of St John's was situated within the ruins of the structure; and the presence of a repositioned Roman Lewis hole all suggest that the majority of the Romanesque church of St John's was constructed out of re-used material from the amphitheatre. A large proportion of the amphitheatre's masonry was clearly transformed into the superstructure of St John's church".[425]

The area to the south-east of Chester's city walls underwent several transitional phases from a Roman amphitheatre to a twelfth-century collegiate church, demonstrating several instances of material re-use. This re-use process encompassed both elements of continuity and elements of change, the transition from a primarily secular space to a completely enclosed

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[425] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 215.

religious precinct with the post-Roman Christianisation of Chester. Despite this problematic understanding of the transition from sacred to secular, that the area surrounding the amphitheatre was later used as a religious site is in no doubt. This is not witnessed at other amphitheatre sites around Britain, where early Anglo-Saxon fortification of the amphitheatres at London and Cirencester show only a secular reoccupation of the site.

The churches near to the London amphitheatre have all replaced their Norman fabric, so it is not possible to tell whether these churches utilised Roman stonework. It is likely that the London amphitheatre was taken over by a minster in the seventh century or later (as at Worcester), but the earliest church was built with wood, and not stone. Other amphitheatres in Britain also affected the surrounding topography and roadways in the same ways that are seen with the amphitheatre at Chester. We must turn to continental examples, such as Arles and the Colosseum, to find the insertion of churches into the fabric of the post-Roman buildings. It is interesting to note that small churches built within these structures did not appear to convey particular religious significance to the amphitheatre as a whole, and almost always accompanied extensive housing built within their surrounds during the Middle Ages. The amphitheatres of Trier and Lucca, like other British examples, were also fortified in the fifth and sixth centuries, but did not contain churches at this time. That the religious precinct of St John's emerged at Chester as a result of early occupation of the amphitheatre is a fairly unique phenomenon, and shows the importance of Roman material culture at this site.

4.3.2 Re-use at St Werberg's

The monastic church of St Werberg's features re-used Roman building material which may have extended across the whole fabric. This may also have been plastered according to the custom for major English Romanesque churches, which may have even dictated the initial choice of re-used material. St Werberg's was also located in an area with a far older Roman settlement tradition, from where it may have derived this material. St Werberg's was the principal church in Chester during the twelfth century, indicating that the re-use of Roman material culture was an acceptable and podesirable practice in architectural traditions in the town.[426] It was one of three Saxon foundations at Chester, originally dedicated to St Peter and St Paul. [427] Late and unreliable sources state that the relics of St Werberg were transferred there in 875 when the nuns at Hanbury feared

[426] At the Conquest it had 12 canons and a warden, with houses in the town and a large endowment and a large intra and extra-mural parish area. Thacker, 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33.

[427] Alldridge,' Aspects of the topography of early medieval Chester': 6.

for their safety during Danish invasions.[428] In the autumn of 1092 the Anglo-Norman earl Hugh I invited Anselm of Bec to re-found St Werberg's as a community of Benedictine monks in a ceremony of great occasion, and the monastery received large endowments from the earl and his primary subjects.[429]

As the earl's principal foundation, the abbey played a dominant role in the city during the twelfth century.[430] Little documentary evidence is available for the construction of the Norman church, though a charter of Abbot Robert (1175-84) details property assigned to the church fabric by his predecessors Hugh I and Ranulph II can tell us something of the church holdings.[431] The Romanesque church of St Werberg's was commenced in the late 1180s, with significant work being undertaken on the east end by 1092. By the time of Earl Hugh's death in 1101, there had been considerable progress in the construction of the surrounding monastic buildings.[432] The main surviving parts of the Romanesque church can be found in the north transept, the base of a column from the Romanesque nave pillar (Figure 82) and in the north-western corner tower (Figure 83) built in the mid twelfth-century.[433] The south aisle of the cloister contained surviving fabric from the twelfth century, but this was rebuilt in the nineteenth century, leaving only a blocked Norman doorway into the north transept (Figure 84).

The southern end of St Werberg's precinct was blocked by the rubble from Roman buildings, and the dog-legged St Werberg's Lane skirts around the back of three Roman barrack blocks replete with hypocaust underfloor heating. This indicates Roman remains may have still stood to some height when the abbey boundaries were laid out and influenced the topography of the site.[434] There were several stages of early fifth- and sixth-century occupation in the abbey grounds and in the late Anglo-Saxon period activity on the site included widespread quarrying and stone robbing.[435] Despite this, the north and east city walls of the fortress adjacent to St

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[428] For an overview of the manuscript sources for the foundation of St Werberg's, please see Tait, *Chartulary of Chester Abbey.*

[429] Thacker,'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings' 24; 'Early medieval Chester 400-1230', 16-33.

[430] The abbot held his own court in the chapel of St Thomas Becket outside Northgate and the monastery also controlled two of the city's three burial grounds. Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings' 25.

[431] Tait, *Chartulary of Chester Abbey.* 55.

[432] The church most likely had a protracted building schedule, with the upper storeys of the nave probably not completed until the later twelfth-century. Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 25; Ward, 'Recent work at St John's and St Werberg's', 49.

[433] Gem, 'Romanesque Architecture in Chester c. 1075-1117', 34.

[434] Alldridge, ' Aspects of the topography of early medieval Chester': 14.

[435] Alldridge, ' Aspects of the topography of early medieval Chester': 14.

Werberg's precinct contain some of the most intact Roman sections, indicating that these were an integral part of the abbey's defences.[436]

There was extensive rebuilding and removal of Roman masonry at St Werberg's, meaning that material remains may have been salvaged for the construction of the Romanesque church of St Werberg's. David Mason provides an excellent estimation of the required stone to construct the Roman walls, including interval towers and gates, and produces the figure of 55,453 tonnes of stone.[437] If we take a quarter of this, roughly the areas of wall that borders St Werberg's abbey, and subtract the amount needed for the gates, it produces the figure of 10,951 tonnes of stone. Even a fraction of this (considering that many repairs to this section of wall are late and post-medieval) could have provided a substantial amount of building stone for the Norman abbey of St Werberg's.

Visual analysis of the wall fabric in the north transept and the north-western tower can establish possible sources of stonework and evidence for re-use in the Romanesque church.[438] The most extensive remnants of Romanesque masonry survive above ground level in the north transept, which contains a three storey elevation on its east side, with a ground floor arch leading to an apsidal chapel (Figure 85), an intermediate level wall passage with Norman open arcading (Figure 86), and a clerestory which is no longer there. The masonry in the north transept, and probably the whole of the Romanesque church was designed to receive plaster, traces of which can still be seen on the roll mouldings of the Romanesque arch (Figure 87). When the arch was reopened in 1930, 'traces of colour and patterns' were visible.[439] The most telling evidence for the application of plaster is the nature of the columns in the triforium gallery, which are composite pieces of irregular stone shaped into columns (Figure 88 and 89). These differ from the re-used columns at St Albans, because they are not single piece of columnar stone assembled into baluster shafts. They clearly required the application of plaster to ensure their uniformity. There are also traces of plaster on the stones in the east wall of the north transept (Figure 90).

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[436] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences*, 38.

[437] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 93.

[438] Simon Ward called for an extensive survey of the interior fabric of St Werberg's cathedral, which unfortunately has still not occurred. The BAA conference proceedings have produced a set of preliminary findings however, which identifies several foundation features from the Norman church. Ward, 'Recent work at St John's and St Werberg's', 51-53, 56.

[439] 'Chester Cathedral, Chester, Cheshire', *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, Centre for Computing in the Humanities, King's College London, 2008, http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/feature/3_Exterior_decoration/Cheshire.html, accessed 10/04/2013.

Recent research has investigated the interior and exterior plastering of many Norman churches.[440] Evidence of plastering at St Werberg's demonstrates the possible re-use of earlier Roman stonework. If plaster was indeed favoured by the Norman builders, then it meant that they may not have needed to quarry fresh stone for neat, cleanly finished ashlar blocks. Instead, they may have looked to other sources of stone, such as the collapsing and degraded Roman buildings still lying *in situ* at Chester. The nearby city walls were of a fairly uniform, *opus quadratum* composition type. However, if medieval builders had salvaged stone from a variety of Roman buildings, then it may have produced a variety of stone blocks of diverse shapes and sizes and with differing tooling types.

This is exactly the pattern of building that we see in the masonry of the north transept at St Werberg's, with blocks of different sizes and shapes with long diagonal strokes, deep and shallow vertical gouges with a fine adze, and long regular strokes with a flat adze (see Figures 91 and 92). Mostly this tooling is fairly crude, and performed with little care to the aesthetic appearance of the wall face. Gotz Echtenacher suggests that crude tooling is necessary for the application of plaster, and surfaces in Norman buildings were often 'roughed up' with strong pick blows in preparation before plastering over.[441] There is also no evidence of finer finishing which characterises other high status Norman buildings suggesting a lack of plastering,[442] though this is not surprising considering the early date of the north transept. Tim Eaton suggests that heavy diagonal tooling, or "broaching", was a common tooling practice on Roman masonry, and can usually be used to identify spoliated stonework.[443]

The different types of tooling on the masonry blocks in the walls of the north transept of St Werberg's may indicate several things. Either the blocks were recycled from different buildings around the town and retain tooling from their initial locations, or these blocks were sourced from a variety of places in Chester, and they received rough tooling in the medieval period to help with the adhesion of plaster when they were re-used in the walls of the Romanesque church. Despite evidence of several phases of repairs and alterations, and the re-application of mortar pointing in the north transept, there is ample evidence to suggest that the stonework in the Romanesque abbey of St Werberg's may have been re-cycled and then plastered, with the most likely supply of stonework coming from the Roman walls and buildings to the south of the abbey precinct. It is also possible that the abbey re-used stonework from Roman buildings on the site of the abbey, or

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[440] Gotz Echtenacher, *Stone Dressing: Aesthetic Aspects of Finishing Techniques*, (unpublished MA dissertation, University of York, 2009), 8.

[441] Echtenacher, *Stone Dressing: Aesthetic Aspects of Finishing Techniques*, 8.

[442] Echtenacher, *Stone Dressing: Aesthetic Aspects of Finishing Techniques*, 9-10.

[443] Tim Eaton, 'Identifying Roman *spolia',* 146 and Figure 75.

even sourced masonry from the Anglo-Saxon church of St Werberg's whose location is still unknown.

4.4 Vernacular, decorative and portable re-use

4.4.1 The re-use of other Roman monumental buildings

Monumental Roman structures at Chester, such as the baths, the enigmatic 'elliptical building', gates and other Roman buildings provided the sites, building material and possibly inspiration for construction techniques in the medieval period. These buildings had a profound impact upon their later environment, not only in terms of the development of topography and roadways, but also in Roman material culture which was re-used in the urban landscape. The Roman fortress baths lay in the south-east corner of the fortress, directly adjacent to the southern gate (see Figure 46). They consisted of three bathing halls: a *tepidarium, frigidarium* and *caldarium*, and to the north of this was an aisled basilica. Attached to the south side of the basilica was a suite of heated rooms, as well as a bathing hall with a swimming pool and an exercise yard. The baths were built into a fairly compact area of 86 square metres, but would have provided monumental remains.[444] The roofing of the bath suite and basilica was impressive concrete vaulting lined with ceramic tubes to support the weight.[445] The baths were serviced by underfloor *hypocaust* heating, topped by intricate mosaic flooring and furnace rooms (*praefurnia* See Figure 93).[446] The bath complex had extensive drainage and water supply systems, which could provide 852,064 litres of water over a 24 hour period.[447]

The post- Roman demolition and re-use of the baths can be charted in phases, depending, according to Mason, "on the structural robustness of each element...and also on the pattern of use by the populations of Anglo- Scandinavian, Norman and medieval Chester".[448] The initial construction of the bath required 17, 224 tonnes of stone,[449] so there was clearly a considerable demolition operation to remove it. The proximity of the *via praetoria,* as one of the later main

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[444] David J.P. Mason et al., *Excavations at Chester. The Roman fortress baths: excavation and recording 1732-1998*. (Chester: Chester City Council, 2005), 32.

[445] Parts of this innovative tubing have been found in excavation and are now on display in the Grosvenor. Mason et al., *Excavations at Chester. The Roman fortress baths*, 35-41.

[446] In the fourth century, stone *pilae* were inserted into the hypocaust of the bath complex (for an example of these, please see Figure 93).

[447] Mason et al., *Excavations at Chester. The Roman fortress baths*, 56.

[448] Unfortunately Mason does not provide a more precise chronology for the demise of the bath building as a usable structure than the years 700-1100, though it is not inconceivable that it was still standing in the tenth century refortification of Æthelflaed. This is ascertained through analysis of deposits of soil on the floor of the bath complex. Mason et al., *Excavations at Chester. The Roman fortress baths*, 83-84.

[449] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 48.

thoroughfares into Chester, meant that the western side of the baths was used as the foundation for several medieval properties in the Norman period.[450] If these were built out of stone, then it is likely that they utilised re-used Roman masonry exclusively in their lower storey.[451] A second phase of robbing in the fourteenth century removed buried portions of walls, which fits with a projection of street development at the site and ceramic evidence.[452] Larger blocks of stone formed the foundations for the medieval street frontages and basements, while at the backs of the properties, all traces of the baths was removed to ground or below ground level by 1500, most likely to provide sources of building material for later buildings in the city.[453]

Directly to the north east of the *principia* is an enigmatic and problematic elliptical building, of which there is no evidence for a similar building anywhere else in the Roman Empire. The elliptical building consisted of a main complex of twelve rooms arranged in an elliptical shape around a colonnaded courtyard with a fountain in the middle. In addition to this, the area had a bath complex to the south-east, as well as a large colonnaded portico entrance and two sets of street frontage ranges, also known as *tabernae* (for a clearer understanding of the layout, it will be helpful to consult Figures 94 and 95 for a plan and three dimensional reconstruction of the building). The elliptical building occupied a total area which measured 41.6m x33.2m, which is a substantial part of the interior area of the fortress. The central oval courtyard measured 14m x 9.75m, which was flanked by an oval range 8.3m divided into twelve rooms of slightly differing sizes (there were some errors with the initial calculations when laying out the building, which means it is not perfectly symmetrical between the north and south halves).[454] When first excavated, it was originally thought to be a theatre, though the structure was too insubstantial too support seating and was enclosed within a rectangular frame.[455]

The elliptical building was planned with a commemorative function for the cult of the Roman state and Julio-Claudian emperors, akin to the Pantheon in Rome. It may have been part of a Flavian initiative whereby Julius Frontinus hoped to establish the provincial command of Britain at the legionary fortress of Chester in the 70s AD (this also fits with the grandiose *opus quadratum*

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[450] As it was not until the Norman period that intensive development of all street frontages occurred, it is possible that most removal and development of the bath complex area occurred during this time. Simon Ward et al. *Excavations at Chester, Saxon occupation within the Roman fortress: sites excavated 1971-1981.* (Chester: Chester City Council, 1994), 123.

[451] Mason et al., *Excavations at Chester. The Roman fortress baths*, 85.

[452] Mason et al., *Excavations at Chester. The Roman fortress baths*, 85.

[453] Mason et al., *Excavations at Chester. The Roman fortress baths*, 86.

[454] Mason, *Excavations at Chester, The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World?,* 3.

[455] R Newstead and J.P. Droop, 'Excavations at Chester, 1939: the Princess Street clearance area', *Journal for the Chester Archaeological Society*, new series. Volume 34, Issue 1 (1982): 13.

composition of the masonry in the impressive fortress walls).[456] However, this plan was never completed above ground level until a third-century modification to the design, though the bath house and *tabernae* were finished and in use throughout the second century. [457] Mason proposes that by the time the whole complex was fully built, the function of the elliptical building had changed to that of a commandants' palace with a residential utility in the second quarter of the third century. Most importantly, the elliptical building was both unusually large, and monumental, and would have made an impression upon the town's topography, supply of building material, and perception of the architectural legacy of the Romans.

Following the withdrawal of Roman troops, it is difficult to reconstruct the building's history.[458] However, the discovery of large amounts of tenth- and eleventh-century 'Chesterware' pottery in the vicinity suggests that this area was relatively heavily occupied in the late Saxon period, and presumably the High Middle Ages.[459] In the period 1150-1400, the surviving fabric of the south-east quarter of the bath building was robbed, in parts to below ground level, to provide the building material for a new stone building. This building copied the building technique used in the bath complex and made use of Roman facing stones in the walls which gave them "a very convincing Roman appearance".[460] This is remarkable, because it shows that twelfth-century builders attempted to reproduce building techniques inspired by the surviving Roman remains. The fact that this building lies directly on the street frontage of the Roman roadway also suggests that the elliptical building and its adjacent roads was intact or at least highly prominent in the landscape into the medieval period.[461] While it is possible that parts of this building had collapsed, the lack of building rubble and debris lying over the Roman buildings at the time of excavation suggests that the sites were cleared and the stone removed.[462] This stone may have been re-used in a variety of medieval structures, including but not limited to, renovations on the city wall or perhaps nearby parish churches.

St Werberg's Grange and the Hospital of St John outwith Northgate, which have not survived in any capacity above ground, may also have been built in relation to a source of Roman

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[456] Mason, *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World?,* 76, 92.

[457] Mason, *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World?,* 1.

[458] Mason, *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World?,* 150.

[459] Ward, S.W. et al., *Excavations at Chester, Saxon occupation within the Roman fortress: sites excavated 1971-1981*. (Chester: Chester City Council, 1994).

[460] Mason, *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World?,*, 151.

[461] One of these roads, known as Goss street, moved slightly to the west as 'Goselane' by the thirteenth century, which implies that the above ground remains of the elliptical building had disappeared by this time. J. Dodgson, 'Place names and street names at Chester'. *Chester Archaeological Society new series*, Volume 55 (1968); p 42.

[462] Mason, *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An image of the Roman World*?, 151.

building stone or proximity to Roman structures. These have not been discussed previously, but it is worth nothing that St Werberg's Grange occupies a position close to the north western corner tower (see Figure 51), which may have fallen into redundancy with the extension of the wall circuit in the Anglo-Saxon period, though it still survived into the twentieth century.[463] This echoes the same geographical choice as St Martin's inside the south-western corner tower. The Hospital of St John was located directly outside the Northgate, which may have been used as a source of building stone for the hospital following one of the various rebuilds of the gate (only the Roman foundations of this gate survive).[464] This hospital was established in the 1190s for the care of the poor, and it negotiated with the larger religious houses for burial rites for its own members after its foundation.[465]

Extramural burial practices reveal information about the continuation of site use from the Roman period. Adjacent to the Hospital of St John was also the abbey's extramural burial ground and chapel of St Thomas.[466] There have been no definitive traces of Roman settlement discovered in the area beyond the Northgate, but a series of Roman inhumation burials, which grew in popularity after the second century have been found not far from the defences.[467] The re-use of this site as a cemetery in the twelfth-century, may have been a continuation of the Roman practice of extramural burials on this area of land. The establishment of these churches around Roman burial areas on the main routes out of the town echoes foundations practice across Europe. Another hospital, St Giles lay some way beyond the Eastgate in the area of Boughton (see Figure 51).[468] There are some Roman burials at this site, but they are first century cremation interment, which means that Christian burial practice was probably not perpetuated through the Anglo-Saxon period to the time of St Giles' foundation. In addition to this, St Giles was founded primarily for lepers in the time of Earl Ranulph II, so it is not unusual that this hospital should be outside the walls a significant distance from the town. In this case, it is likely that St Giles did *not* follow meaningful Roman burial patterns.

There was a Roman burial ground in the area to the north-east of the eastern Watergate in the area adjacent to Greyfriars and under St Chad's – an extramural medieval chapel. Judging by the quantity of funerary monuments which have been found at the town (many used to make wall

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[463] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences,* 7.

[464] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences*, 105.

[465] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 26.

[466] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 27.

[467] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 111, 149.

[468] Thacker, 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings', 26.

repairs since the Anglo-Saxon period),[469] burial areas may have been visible above ground, especially along the routes out of Chester. It is interesting to note that Chester only had one burial site within the Roman intramural space, at St Werberg's, which indicates that the formation of burial sites generally conforms to extramural areas selected in the Roman period. All of the smaller parish churches except St Mary's were forbidden to bury within their church yards.[470] This may be coincidental, as St John's and St Werberg's guarded burial privileges fiercely in the twelfth-century, but burial areas outside the town clearly maintained continuity from the Roman period.

In the late twelfth century there were several lesser religious houses founded in the east of the town, a Benedictine nunnery and Franciscan and a Dominican friaries. These establishments, of which unfortunately nothing survives, occupied large areas in the vicinity of the large Roman bath house directly outside the west gate. They probably would have re-used material from this structure, or from the superior residences of the western Roman suburbs.[471] It is also important to remember that the Roman walls would have been dismantled immediately prior to this period. Both Holy Trinity and St Martin's (see below) were founded over parts of the defensive structure, which means that the course of the walls would have been available for source material throughout the twelfth century, and were most likely used in the religious houses founded outside the Roman wall circuit.

It is clear that all of the larger buildings associated with Roman Chester were incorporated into, and impacted upon, the development of the medieval topography at Chester. In many cases, the buildings themselves were re-used in different functions during the Anglo-Saxon period; and by the Norman period they had begun to be completely dismantled for building stone and the geographical usefulness of their sites. A series of other buildings are located outside the town, which includes a possible additional bathhouse at the bottom end of Watergate and a *mansio* to the south end of the town in the vicinity of the *canabae* or civilian town attached to the fort.[472] Archaeological evidence for these buildings suggests that large parts of their flooring and below ground foundations survived past the Norman period, possibly due to their extramural position. These buildings show signs of post-Roman occupation, and like their intramural counterparts may also have been used as a supply of masonry to make repairs to the walls or other medieval buildings. In some cases, there is evidence to suggest that the choice of site was meaningful to later builders, and building techniques were sometimes emulated. This indicates that the re-use of

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[469] LeQuesne, *Excavations at Chester. The Roman and later defences*, 114.

[470] Lewis and Thacker, 'Medieval religious houses', 16-33.

[471] Mason, *Roman Chester: City of the Eagles*, 215.

[472] Mason, 'Chester: The Canabae Legionis': 146-150.

these sites and stonework was not simply a convenient masonry source for use in medieval buildings, and carried an inherent importance due to their size and association with the Roman past.

4.4.3 Portable and decorative Roman artefacts at Chester

Chester was a military garrison which supported a population of approximately six thousand soldiers, and an extramural civilian *canabae*. This was no small settlement, and the remains of Chester's Roman history would have been evident throughout all subsequent periods. At many places around Chester, large pieces of monumental Roman stonework and other Roman remains can be found. These include column bases, capitals, lead ingots, columns and a series of stone *pilae* from the bath excavations in the Roman Gardens and the square on Northgate Street. There is also an excellent collection of engraved Roman stonework and monumental inscriptions in the Grosvenor museum (Figure 102), which has been assembled from many excavations around the town. Some of these funerary monuments were recovered during repairs to the walls in the nineteenth century. In addition to this, other discoveries of portable Roman culture have been made and continue to be made regularly. These include tiles, amphorae, Samian Ware and other ceramic goods, lead pipes and ingots, portable shrines and some weapons and other military trappings. While these have mostly been found during excavation at Chester, it is likely that these sorts of items have been discovered or visible at Chester since the Roman period. The presence of portable material culture would have continually emphasised evidence of the town's Roman past to the medieval population.

Lucian's description of St Peter intersects with Roman material culture, when he refers to the saint as a column which supported the gift of God.[473] Doran proposes that this shows an awareness of columns which decorated the city of Rome and were used in the construction of basilicas, but it may also be possible that this passage demonstrates awareness of Roman columns at Chester. For Lucian, it is an uncharacteristic reference to fairly portable construction material, which means that it may have been all the more visible to him as a resident of the city. Using the language of the urban landscape: gates, walls, foundations and columns, Lucian demonstrated an understanding of the suitability of the site chosen for St Peter's at Chester: in relation to the Roman past, its impact on the medieval topography of the city, and its relationship with St Peter's in Rome. He establishes his allegorical discussion of St Peter's in Chester within an understanding of physical and material culture relating to Rome.

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[473] Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon,* 80.

Ranulf Higden's description of Chester contains a fourteen line Latin poem which describes the city. The passage opens with the statement "In cujis urbis laudem metricus quidam sic propuit"[474] [Thus we break out in a certain metrical poem concerning praise of the city].[475] This sentence implies that this praise poem may have been well known in the town, or at least was not composed by Higden and originated from a source with which he was familiar. The poem commences as follows (interspersed with my own translation line for line):

Cestria de castro nomen quasi Castria sumpsit,

Chester takes its name from 'castle',[476] a sort of fortified camp,

Incertum cujus hanc manus ediderit.

It is uncertain whose hands gave this forth.

Anglis et Cambrish nunc manet urbs celebris.

We English and Welsh now frequent the busy city.

In muris pendent lapides velut Herculis actus,

In the walls the stones hang just as if Hercules placed them.

Agger et augetur tutior ut maneat.

 And the rampart is reinforced in order that it may remain secure.

Saxula Saxonica superextant addita magnis,

Small Saxon stones project in addition to great stones.

 Concava testudo bina latet sub humo.

A hollow double arched vault[477] lies hidden under the earth.

Mineras profert Salinas proxima tellus,

The land nearby brings forth a layer of salt-pans,

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[475] Own translation.

[476] This can also mean military camp, fort/ress, a fortified place, or a town (derived from classical as well as medieval sources). It is uncertain what the author is implying here; he either refers to the Norman castle, or the origins of the town as a Roman fortress. We can probably assume that by the twelfth century, the meaning of 'castrum' was closer to 'castle', but the author makes it clear that this term had multiple meanings.

[477] This understanding of 'vault' from 'testudo' was taken from the Mapping Medieval Chester project edited by Helen Fulton. Harper's Latin dictionary also defines it as an 'arched vault' or 'from the arched shape of the tortoise shell'.

Quas spargit multis gentibus occiduis.

which disperses westward to many people.

Carnibus et farre, sic piscibus affluit urbs haec;

You will be brought meat and fish, in such a way that these float by the city.

Merces et classes advehit unda mare.

And fleets bring goods from the sea.

Henrici quarti, Godescalli Caesaris olim,

Henry IV, formerly Emperor Goddescalle,

Regis et Haraldi pulvis habetur ibi.

and Harold will there be held as dust.

Mars et Mercurius, Bacchus, Venus, atque Laverna,

Mars and Mercury, Bacchus, Venus, together with Laverna,

Proteus et Pluto regna tenant inibi.

Proteus and Pluto reign there in that place.

Ejus gens sequitur multum mores Babylonis,

Its people will follow many customs of Babylon,

Quae dum plus poterit, plus solet esse ferox.

As long as that will be possible for them, the more they are accustomed to be savage.

This poem demonstrates how Roman material culture forms part of the establishment of Chester's identity. It opens with a line concerning the physical presence of a military garrison at the town, and creates an ambiguous etymology of the Latin word 'castra'. These lines must be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to remain abstruse about the town's beginnings, whilst still asserting its military background.[478] The poem describes the current occupants of the town-namely the English and the Welsh – while noting that the stones in the walls of the fortress were of Saxon origin, overlaying other unidentified 'great stones', of implied Roman source. The poem

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[478] The author of this poem never states that the town was founded by the Romans, and he could in fact be referring to the Norman castle built in the post-Conquest period. This may explain Higden's earlier reluctance to assert the Roman origins of Chester if he is using this pre-existing poem as his main source. However, Higden and the author of this poem make use of an etymological framework established by Anglo-Saxon scholars, and it is likely that they would have not have done so if they were referring specifically to a name derived from the later Norman castle at Chester.

tells of a 'hollow double arched vault' lying hidden under the ground, relating the author's personal eyewitness observation or something they had been told.[479] The final lines of the poem tell of a series of Roman deities taken from classical folklore including War, Trade, Wine, Love, Thieves, The Sea and Death, all Gods which can be associated with the needs and interests of a medieval town. Their presence is particularly unusual in a text which makes no reference to God, emphasising Chester's Roman pagan heritage. The following reference to the biblical story of Babylon implies that the influence of different classical deities is a pre-Christian process affecting the disposition and temperament of its medieval inhabitants.

Ranulf Hidgen describes some Roman remains at Chester, in his late fourteenth-century description of the town:

> Sunt viae subterraneae, lapideo opera mirabiliter testudinatae, triclinia concamerata, insculpti lapides pergrandes antiquorum nomina praeferentes. Numismata quoque, Julii Caesaris aliorumque illustrium inscriptione insignata, aliquando sunt effossa.[480]

> [There are underground passages; marvellously arched fortifications of stone; dining rooms having been vaulted over; and very large stones displaying ancient names carved on their front; likewise coins having been marked with different inscriptions of distinguished Julius Caesar.][481]

Like Matthew Paris at St Albans, Higden displays his keen interest in the material remains of the Romans. He shows an understanding of larger remains by referring to 'underground passages' as drainage systems or aqueducts, and describing vaulted rooms or the arches of aqueducts within the fortifications. This information may have been derived from the praise poem discussed above, which most likely was written before the compilation of the Polychronicon and used as a source by Higden. Archaeological evidence at Chester suggests that most of the large Roman remains had been removed and built over by the end of the twelfth century demonstrating that Higden used a literary source which was twelfth century or earlier, or there was knowledge of the larger Roman remains at Chester dating from before their removal. Higden's description shows that interest and knowledge about Roman remains were perpetuated at Chester in the Norman period, and demonstrates that people made a conscious effort to learn and propagate information about the Roman occupation of Britain.

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[479] If the described vault refers to below-ground remains, it is possible that it survived longer than the clearance of surface debris by the end of the twelfth-century as the underground remains at Hamilton Place still lie *in situ*.

[480] Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon,* 78-80.

[481] Own translation.

Higden's comments about inscriptions and coinage may derive from personal observation of these inscriptions or coins, because they are not mentioned in the twelfth-century poem. If this is the case, then portable material culture and descriptions of what this may have entailed were available at Chester right up until the early fourteenth century. The possibility of funerary monuments and other inscriptions being found at the town is likely, considering the availability for re-use during repairs to the wall throughout the middle ages and the discovery of objects around the town and during modern excavation. It is interesting that Higden relates images on the faces of coins to the idealised image of Julius Caesar. No coins of Caesar would have been present at the site, yet Julio-Claudian profiles were obviously recognisable to the medieval audience as the embodiment of Rome. Medieval texts reproduce this classical trope, whereby Caesar is often the sole Roman responsible for the conquest of England.

4.4.4 Shrine to Minerva in St Edgar's fields

A particularly interesting aspect of Roman Chester is a small shrine carved into the rock face at a Roman quarry site to the south of the River Dee. The Romans sourced building stone from several sites close to Chester, some of which are still evident along the riverbank, and its workers practised Roman cult worship. This particular quarry site features a representation of Minerva, patron of arts and trade, and regarded as the tutelary deity for the masons and quarrymen who worked there.[482] It is believed to originate from the early second century AD, and depicts a helmeted and robed Minerva standing under a pediment, with a spear in her right hand, and a shield and an owl in her left (Figures 103 and 104). It was first recorded by William Stukely, and excavations were carried out around the site by Newstead in the nineteen twenties.[483] Since then, this carving has not been examined in any great detail, despite the shrine being the only example surviving in situ of its kind in Britain.[484] The shrine is currently protected from the elements by a nineteenth century stone surround with a hood.[485]

A tradition at the town states that this carving was revered as an image of the Virgin Mary in the medieval period, and antiquarian scholars proposed that the image would not have survived intact if it had been identified as a pagan symbol in the Middle Ages.[486] The extensive

[482] Mason, 'Chester: The Canabae Legionis', 151.

[483] R. Newstead, 'Records of archaeological finds at Chester', *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society New series,* Volume 27, part II, (1928), 104-108.

[484] 'Roman Shrine to Minerva, Chester'. English Heritage list entry, http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1375783, accessed 23rd September 2011.

[485] 'Roman Shrine to Minerva, Chester'. English Heritage list entry, http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1375783, accessed 23rd September 2011.

[486] Newstead, 'Records of archaeological finds at Chester'.

weathering to the surface of the carving suggests that it has not been covered at any period, which means that it must have been exposed since Roman times and visible to those who ventured along the river bank off the southern approach to the town. However, it is not certain that any medieval person would have understood a figure carrying a spear and a bird to be an image of the Virgin Mary, and this may have been considered instead to be a local saint, perhaps St Werberg. It is intriguing that later depictions of St Werberg feature the saint with a long 'spear-like' crozier, and it was a medieval tradition that she was protected by swans. If this is not a satisfactory explanation, then perhaps we should consider that the image was actually understood in its original manifestation as Minerva throughout the history of the town.

Images of Minerva feature in later medieval manuscripts, probably most famously in conjunction with Christine de Pizan in her study, so they may have been familiar to a medieval audience. This suggests that classical tutelary deities were common in medieval culture and the role that the shrine of Minerva played in the spiritual life of Chester. Regardless of whom the medieval inhabitants of Chester thought the shrine was dedicated to, this image may have been part of a local folklore tradition at the town as it was never destroyed. It is one of the most thought-provoking occurrences of the re-use of Roman decorative sculpture in England, perhaps rivalling the medieval re-use of images of Sulis-Minerva at Bath. Re-use in this instance does not entail the physical translation of material, but rather the changing or continuous meanings which Roman iconography portrayed in the medieval period.

4.5 Conclusion

The re-use of Roman material culture was prevalent across the whole of Chester from the late Anglo-Saxon period, as the town became re-inhabited as an urban site during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Many of Chester's late-Saxon parish churches were founded over Roman sites, and burial areas remained predominantly outside city limits according to Roman custom. In the late-Saxon period, the circuit of the Roman wall was also extended and repaired. This settlement pattern can also be seen at London, Lincoln, York and Canterbury,[487] implying that the re-occupation at Chester indicates a reappropriation of Roman remains seen in other contemporaneous British cities. Like St Albans, there was a demonstrable interest in Roman remains and their re-use in Saxon Chester, showing that later Norman re-use continued and drew upon existing traditions, rather than asserting an entirely new authority.

However, following the Norman Conquest, re-use manifested itself on a larger scale and with a greater degree of innovation than had been seen before. Site use, building material and

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[487] Ward et al. *Excavations at Chester, Saxon occupation within the Roman fortress*, 119.

style were adopted or emulated from Roman remains, as Roman material culture left a lasting impression on the Norman architectural milieu. From the twelfth century onwards, Chester's monastic authors created histories of the town in which the Roman past played an important role. Roman remains became the inspiration for fantastic descriptions of the city's material and spiritual riches, and the antique Roman occupation of Chester lead to an enhanced status of the medieval town. The pre-Conquest interest in the Roman past continued into the Norman period, as new Norman institutions drew from the material environment around them to lend credence to their own monastic and secular aims. When we consider material and literary evidence in conjunction, it becomes apparent that there was a lasting and demonstrable interest in re-using the Roman past.

The new Norman elite at Chester were formed from the office of the relatively autonomous Saxon Earls of Chester, and Benedictine abbots. Immediately following the Conquest, William I installed one of his chief military commanders, Hugh D'Avranches, at Chester. Hugh had considerable experience managing border holdings, and was well suited for the position of subduing the town. He ruled Chester for nearly fifty years, constructing a small castle to guard the River Dee and promoting urban growth, including the foundation of its largest monastic house. A large part of this architectural expansion utilised and engaged with Roman remains. Despite Chester's apparent independence in the post-Conquest period, it still conformed to the traditions of other previous Roman settlements, whereby Roman remains, Norman buildings and descriptions of the Roman past show that it was a meaningful and evocative tool for the creation and maintenance of power.

Smaller foundations too, derived a sense of legitimacy from Roman remains. Many of Chester's medieval churches occupied the sites or the physical ruins of Roman buildings, and these were rebuilt in the Norman period on a larger scale using their remains. Smaller Roman structures, such as gates and wall towers contained several parish churches; whereas larger Roman structures, such as the amphitheatre or the *principia* building contained larger Norman buildings. The re-use of Roman sites and Roman building material indicates a practical incentive for the construction of parish churches, but certain cases, such as the adjacent churches of St Michael's and St Bridget's demonstrate that re-use at a parish level could be a conscious or meaningful decision.

Churches such as St Michael's and St Peter's were significantly affected by foundations underneath, and were raised significantly above street level. At other sites sites, the location was selected because it fit with the established Roman topography or provided access to ready building material. This is reinforced in the textual record. Lucian's twelfth-century description of the city orientated it in relation to Rome, but at the same time asserted Chester's own primacy.

Lucian describes St Peter's position at the centre of Chester over monumental Roman remains, creating a spiritual schema of the town, structured around its relationship with Roman material culture. Lucian's text, written at St Werberg's in the late- twelfth century, demonstrates a monastic attempt to claim authority from the material landscape in which it resided, while at the same time creating international links with Rome. Interestingly, Lucian's did not derive this dual authority from realistic descriptions of Roman remains, preferring an allegorical schema for his description of the Roman history of the town. Similarly, unlike the claims of St Albans, which were intended to supersede other monasteries, Lucian's text generously included business at St John's. This shows that *romanitas* at Chester aimed for a more collective civic primacy.

The later texts of Henry Bradshaw and Ranulph Higden (which may, in fact, have twelfth-century origins) continue this civic tradition in their praise of Chester, which features descriptions of Roman buildings prior to their demolition. These authors also demonstrate knowledge of Roman artefacts, such as inscriptions, coins, columns, drains, vaulting and other architectural features, describing them in a detail which suggests these authors had been personally witness to Roman remains *in-situ* or preserved in a re-used state. The Roman shrine to Minerva may also have survived due to its association with the Roman pantheon, with which Ranulph Hidgen's praise poem of Chester demonstrates a familiarity. Alternatively, the medieval townspeople of Chester may instead have interpreted the shrine as a figure of the Saxon St Werberg, appropriating the physical culture and ascribing new meanings in a new Christian context. While textual *romanitas* at Chester did not use the Roman material legacy as creatively as the monastic efforts of St Albans, it drew from a greater range of sources.

The monasteries of St John's and St Werberg's were re-built following the Conquest, making extensive use of Roman building material and also utilising the sites of previous Roman settlement. The Augustinian foundation of St John's had a particular relationship with the nearby amphitheatre, a site that had been continually occupied since the early Anglo-Saxon period, providing large amounts of building material for nearby buildings, and possibly the location of an early church dedicated to St John. The Roman amphitheatre had connotations of late-Roman Christian martyrdom, perpetuated by medieval descriptions of the city as early as Gildas, which lent the site a meaningful religious significance. Like St Albans, St John's claimed authority for its religious primacy from a very early Christian Passion. The re-use of Roman material culture at St John's transferred some of this perceived religiosity, and can be identified by the repositioning of Lewis holes and the size of the masonry blocks in the Norman east end. The siting of the precinct of St John's around the Roman amphitheatre significantly affected the layout of the monastery and the decision to retain the site for later use.

The re-use of Roman remains at St Werberg's led to the creation of the monumental abbey and the incorporation of Roman remains as part of the flourishing of English Romanesque in Chester. St Werberg's was founded in an area of the city relatively clear of previous medieval settlement, and was still affected by the presence of Roman foundations. The Roman stonework in the north transept of St Werberg's shows signs of *spoliation,* such as irregular tooling and block size. St Werberg's may have been built out of re-used Roman masonry because it provided a suitable surface with which to apply plaster. This chapter has highlighted connections between the occurrence of plaster in Norman ecclesiastical buildings and the re-use of stonework, providing further evidence for the ongoing debate surrounding occurrence of plaster in Anglo-Norman architecture. St Werberg's would have adhered to emerging Anglo-Norman architectural trends, and when considered in conjunction with Lucian's text, produced nearly a hundred years later, shows that St Werberg's also had demonstrable interest in preserving and promoting the Roman material past. Like many other civic institutions in Chester, St Werberg's unified the two aspects of emerging Anglo-Norman power — claims of antiquity derived from Roman remains with new monumental structures.

This chapter has demonstrated that the meaningful re-use of Roman remains was a fundamental part of the Norman building program in Chester. It permeated all major architectural endeavours in the town, both secular and religious, and because the ultimate expression of political, social and religious dominance of the new Norman order. In Chester, this was primarily executed by the Anglo-Norman earls, operating as agents of royal power, but who also sought the prestige associated with Roman remains to secure their own primacy. The pervasiveness of Roman re-use eventually filtered down to a parish level, and this chapter has also shown the colloquial re-use practices which ensured the survival of the shrine to Minerva, and the literary expressions of re-use propagated by the monks of Chester.

Chapter Five: Colchester

5.1 Introduction and history of Colchester

Colchester in Essex features a variety of examples of the physical re-use of Roman material culture, ranging from the retention of topography and fortifications from the Roman period, to the reoccupation of Roman sites and the re-use of building material in parish churches. Colchester also features the re-use of Roman remains and the emulation of decorative techniques in the town's monastic houses, as well as in the town's castle, which was built almost immediately following the Conquest (see Table 4 at the end of this section for a detailed timeline of events at Colchester). Colchester was of strategic importance to the new Norman elite, which was signified by the appointment of a royal steward. The steward promoted the Roman past through his patronage of Colchester's major buildings on multiple levels. Textual accounts produced at the town in the eleventh and twelfth-centuries reinforced the importance of Rome's material legacy, both though descriptions of the Roman past and promotion of historical figures associated with the town. Most importantly, there are also documented references to the re-use of Roman material remains left behind. To fully understand the complexities of these re-use relationships, we must explore how material and textual culture at Colchester developed over time, preceded by an historical overview of the site.

Besides the comprehensive surveys of the proactive Colchester Archaeological Trust, there are very few publications on the archaeology or literature of Roman or medieval Colchester. Often these are simply watching briefs, and there is no overarching recent text which marries all known archaeological information about the town. The chief sources on Colchester come from Phillip Crummy and Paul Drury, through long association with the town's archaeological investigation. Drury's work primarily focusses on the archaeology of the Roman Temple of Claudius and Colchester Castle, while Crummy provides more comprehensive surveys of the town's parish churches, Benedictine and Augustinian abbeys, topography, and Roman remains. This chapter provides a significantly new appraisal of the small amount of texts produced at Colchester, beyond their addition in archaeological reports seemingly added as an afterthought or side interest. The main focus of these is on the literary traditions of Helena and Coel, and this chapter gives particular emphasis to the relationship between these texts and physical remains at the town. This chapter also offers the reader a visual analysis of St Botolph's abbey, and investigation into its re-use of Roman remains and positioning in relation to the Roman town. Finally, this chapter offers a new perspective on long-standing questions of architectural inspiration and patronage in relation to Colchester Castle.

Pre-Roman settlement at Colchester consisted of a defensive area in the Essex peninsula covering approximately ten square miles, which was enclosed by a series of dykes and rivers.[488] This area, occupied by late-Iron Age defences, was known as 'Camulodunum'— derived from 'Camulos,' the native British war God.[489] This area formed part of the extensive territory of late-Iron Age kings such as Cunobelinus, who merged the tribes of the Trinovantes and Catuvellauni prior to the Claudian invasion led by Aulus Plautius in 43 AD.[490] Like St Albans, Colchester's local geology features little natural building stone, and this is reflected in the primary use of flint, tile, septaria and concrete as the primary building materials throughout the town's history.

The first Roman settlement at Colchester was a legionary fortress used by the twentieth legion during Plautius' subjugation of south-eastern Britain.[491] Despite being the first fortress in Britain, it would have followed the topographical conventions of continental examples. Little was known about the actual fortress, due to a dearth of evidence for its main buildings (for example, the exact location of the *principia* is unknown*)*. However, excavations around Lion Walk and Culver Street in the 1970s and 1980s revealed the plan of the fortress was later incorporated into the western half of the later *colonia*.[492] Unusually, the fortress had a large annexe area to its east, which most likely contained extra space for stores, and possibly a temple to Roman deities. There was considerable space in the fortress, and Crummy posits that it may have been left unfinished when its legion was moved to the western part of Britain in 49 AD. This took place as the fortress was converted into a town for veterans of the initial conquest, called *Colonia Victricensis*.

The buildings of the new chartered colony appropriated much of the original fortress, and the street grid of the *colonia* was laid out over the fortress and annexe (Figure 106). A theatre and monumental arch were also constructed in this period, and the central *principia* may have been converted into a forum/basilica.[493] The wooden and earthwork defences of the fortress were levelled and filled in, which proved to be a fatal mistake when the town was attacked by Boudiccan forces in 60 or 61 AD.[494] Tacitus tells us of the abuses of the veterans which were

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[488] For an excellent description of Iron Age Colchester, and an examination of major earthwork sites in the Essex area, see C.F.C. Hawkes and M.R.Hull. *Camulodunum: First Report on the Excavations at Colchester 1930-1939*, (Oxford: Society of Antiquaries, 1947).

[489] Hawkes and Hull, *Camulodunum: First Report on the Excavations at Colchester 1930-1939*, 6.

[490] I.A. Richmond, 'Introduction' in Hawkes and Hull's *Roman Colchester*, (Oxford: Society of Antiquaries, 1958), xxv-xxvi.

[491] Phillip Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, (London: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1997), 39.

[492] Janet Cooper and C.R. Elrington, 'The Legionary Fortress', *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 9, The Borough of Colchester*, (1994): 2-18.

[493] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 57.

[494] Janet Cooper and C.R. Elrington, 'Roman Colchester second to fourth century', *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 9, The Borough of Colchester*, (1994): 2-18.

settled at Colchester, and intimates that it was their treatment of the native British which led to the country-wide rebellion which also subdued London. Cassius Dio cites an abrupt demand for loan repayment made to the British elite by prominent Romans.[495] Either way, the native forces that entered *Colonia Victricensis* besieged the town for two days, which resulted in a massive loss of life and the destruction of many of the town's buildings. Numerous inhabitants took refuge in the Temple of Claudius, and all of those which entered the first colonial temple (including veterans, women, children and native Britons), were killed.

Out of the case studies discussed in this thesis, Colchester has the least amount of available archaeological evidence for its public buildings. Several excavations have taken place around the town, but most of the work carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust is currently small-scale or watching briefs. Much of Colchester's excavations also remain unpublished, so it is not particularly easy to speculate on the location or full plan of many of the town's larger structures. In many cases, their whereabouts are roughly known but remain uncovered. Despite this, it is possible to conclude that, following the Boudiccan rebellion, Colchester would have had a number of important Roman buildings. These would have included: a theatre; forum complex; monumental arches at the entrances to the town; the Temple of Claudius and a large altar to victory in the complex; several smaller temples and a confirmed Mithraeum. These would have taken several years to rebuild after the Bouddican attack, as all non-stone buildings in the town were completely destroyed.[496]

Between the mid-second and early third centuries, well-built town houses, many with mosaic flooring, were built at Colchester.[497] The full circuit of the Roman walls can be dated no earlier than 150 AD, which means that the town would have been left unfortified for a considerable amount of time following the construction of the new buildings.[498] In the late third and fourth centuries, several of the town gates were blocked, and houses in the town were demolished and not replaced as land was given over to cultivation.[499] Christian burials became prevalent in the fourth century, as newly-aligned east/west cemeteries were laid over pagan burial sites. At the Butt Road site, the foundations of a building which has been identified as one of two Roman Christian churches in England, was excavated in the 1970s. The fourth-century remodelling of the Temple of Claudius with the addition of an apse (see below), has been cited as

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[495] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 74.

[496] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 85.

[497] Cooper and Elrington, 'The Legionary Fortress', 2-18.

[498] I.A. Richmond, 'Introduction', xxix.

[499] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 114-118.

evidence of its conversion into a Christian church.[500] Colchester clearly had a sizeable Christian population in the late Roman-Empire, and this must have continued into the Anglo-Saxon period as the town fell into disuse and disrepair over the course of the fourth and fifth centuries.

The earliest recorded post-Roman settlement in Colchester comes from a Saxon wooden hut at the Lion Walk site.[501] The other evidence for early Anglo-Saxon occupation mainly derives from small finds and the Anglo-Saxon burials in several grounds around the town from the fifth until at least the late seventh century.[502] The later Anglo-Saxon period possibly saw Danish settlement in the town, as the Anglo-Saxon chronicle reports that in 917, "a great host…from Kent, from Surrey, from Essex and from the nearest boroughs on all sides…went to Colchester and besieged the borough and attacked it until they took it and killed all the men who fled there over the wall".[503] The Chronicle also records the restoration of the town's fortifications later that year: "King Edward went with the army of the West Saxons to Colchester and repaired and restored the borough where it had been broken".[504] This is clear evidence that the town's Roman walls were still standing and defensible in the late Anglo-Saxon period. It also supports the notion that many of the town's Roman buildings may have stood until the construction of Colchester's parish churches in the late Anglo-Saxon period (discussed in greater detail in the parish church section).

There were two major late-Saxon phases of settlement in the town. During the eighth and ninth centuries, settlement away from the High Street was sparse, and most pottery finds come from a concentrated area along this strip which was marked out in clear frontages.[505] In the eleventh century, the High Street was diverted slightly around the castle precinct which was then a high status Anglo-Saxon enclave, and the houses along the frontage near the castle were demolished.[506] Colchester was home to the second Norman keep constructed in masonry in Britain, which has traditionally been dated to 1076. The construction of the castle marked Colchester as a defensible town following the Conquest, and a prominent Norman settlement. Its position meant that it was close to London, and a convenient place to guard the Essex peninsula. The Benedictine abbey of St John's was also founded to the south of the town in the late eleventh-

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[500] Janet Cooper and C.R. Elrington, 'The Roman colony' *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 9, The Borough of Colchester*, (1994): 2-18.

[501] Phillip Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester,* (London: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1981), 1-6.

[502] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester,* 23.

[503] Dorothy Whitelock, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, revised edition*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), 65.

[504] Whitelock, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 66.

[505] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester,* 70-71.

[506] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester,* 70-71.

century (around 1095), followed by the establishment of St Botolph's Augustinian priory in the between 1099 and 1104, which was probably a refoundation of an existing Anglo-Saxon canonry. Despite Colchester's royal patronage, neither of these institutions reached a particularly high status compared with other monastic houses of the early Norman period. St Botolph's had no powerful benefactors at its foundation (see below), and St John's did not produce historical or literary documents in the same manner as other houses, resulting in comparatively scarce textual evidence for this case study. Despite Colchester's literary and archaeological paucity in comparison to the other two case study sites, it still provides some of the most compelling examples of Roman re-use in England following the Conquest.

In the later twelfth-century, stone houses were built throughout the town, and at least seven of these contain Roman building material salvaged from the surrounding town.[507] The topography of medieval Colchester also followed the Roman street plan fairly closely. Many of the Roman thoroughfares, such as the *via principalis* and the *via praetoria* which became part of the later *colonia*, were in continuous medieval use from at least the eighth century. Indeed, if this continuity can be traced to this point, then it is likely that Colchester's topography was maintained in the early Saxon period. The courses of many of the town's minor roads were also perpetuated by the re-use of Roman foundations in later medieval buildings, and the large open areas created by the theatre, forum and temple were ideal places to construct important post-Conquest structures such as the castle and the important chapel of St Helen's. The history and archaeological development of Colchester follows that of the other towns examined in this thesis, with a Roman settlement, sparse early Anglo-Saxon occupation and a reinvigoration of the town with Danish or Anglo-Saxon settlement in the two centuries prior to the Conquest. Many of the town's major secular and ecclesiastical buildings were constructed in the late-eleventh and twelfth-centuries, with parish churches built or rebuilt in the twelfth-century. Almost all of the town's major Norman buildings feature large amounts of salvaged Roman masonry, occupied Roman sites and copied Roman decoration, which is also discussed in literature relating to the town. Through an examination of topography, fortifications (including Colchester Castle), parish churches and monasteries, it becomes clear that re-use at Colchester not only expressed meaningful appropriation of Roman remains, but that this was used to serve explicitly royal and national interests following the Conquest.

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[507] Phillip Crummy's excellent survey of these houses can be found in Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester,* 53-70. It is sufficient to note that these buildings contained extensive re-used masonry, and formed the residences and workshops of the town's higher status inhabitants in the Norman period.

Table 4: Timeline of events

43AD	A Roman fortress was built at Colchester during Aulus Plautius' invasion of Britain.
49AD	The initial Roman fortress at Colchester was converted into a civilian town, extending into the fortress annexe and levelling the earth and timber defences.
60 or 61 AD	The Boudiccan revolt besieged the city, destroying a great many of the buildings and resulting in widespread loss of life.
150 AD	Earliest date for the current city walls
2nd century	Colchester was a flourishing Roman town, with a full complement of official buildings and a large urban population.
Late 3rd-4th centuries	Several town gates were blocked, houses were demolished and not replaced, and land inside the city walls was used for cultivation.
4th-5th centuries	Conversion of the Temple of Claudius, Christian burial practices commence and the decline and near abandonment of the town.
5th -8th centuries	Settlement was sparse, concentrated in strip allotments along the High Street with burials around the town.
917	Danish army attacked Colchester. The Roman walls were repaired by King Edward the Elder several years later.
11th century	Settlement began to move away from the High Street, and many of Colchester's parish churches were founded around the town.
1071	A Danish raid on the coast which may have attacked Colchester.
1076	Traditional date for the foundation of Colchester castle by Eudo Dapifer, steward for William the Conqueror, who was later given the castle until his death. The castle was the second Norman keep in England.
1095	Eudo founded the Benedictine monastery of St John's to the south of the town.
1099-1104	The foundation of the Augustinian St Botolph's priory, which may have been a community of pre-Conquest secular canons east of St John's.
1115-1116	The church of St John's was completed and dedicated.
1119	Death of Eudo Dapifer, who had supported William I, William II, and Henry I.
1133	Many of the parish churches were rebuilt after a town-wide fire.
Early to mid-12th C	Helena myth is appropriated and disseminated by William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth.
1177	Completion of the buildings of the priory of St Botolph's, and dedication of the church.
1095-1177	Lost annals of St John's compiled, including an account of the Life of St Helen, and chronological entries relating to the town, which formed part of the fourteenth-century Red Oath book.
1200	All parish churches were founded by this time. Six of the ten, and possibly an addition three, were pre-Conquest foundations.
1239	Supposed rededication of St Helen's chapel.

5.3 Re-use of the Temple of Claudius and Colchester Keep

Having examined the urban layout of Colchester and its lower status churches, we can now move onto an examination of the town's most compelling example of re-use – the monumental Norman keep. There are four distinct ways in which the Colchester Keep 'emulated' or 'translated' aspects of Roman material culture. These words have been chosen carefully, as emulation implies the conscious 'copying' of various aspects of Roman design and translation implies the actual physical re-use of Roman material. The two are not mutually exclusive however, and Colchester Keep provides examples of the ways in which these two aspects of re-use overlap and inform each other. To begin with, the location of the castle, within the original fortress annexe and later temple precinct, entirely respects Roman topographical boundaries. This is inherently tied to the keep's position directly over the podium of the Roman temple of Claudius, and the incorporation of that massive foundational structure into the fabric of the building.

The keep is almost exclusively built of re-used Roman building materials, salvaged from the town, making this an additional use of original Roman brick and stonework. Finally, Colchester Keep is decorated in a manner which suggests a meaningful reference to the decoration of other Roman buildings in the town, particularly the Roman walls. In addition to material appropriation, there are textual references which describe the construction of the castle and link this monumental Roman structure with accounts of the Roman past. Charters pertaining to prominent buildings in the town describe the relationship between prominent Roman and Norman personages associated with the Keep. Accounts of Eudo Dapifer, as well as mythical legends of Constantine, Helena and King Coel were produced at the town. These were propagated more widely by twelfth-century writers such as Geoffrey of Monmouth, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, cementing links between historical Roman figures, the British past, and the local history of Colchester and its castle.

5.3.1 The Roman Temple of Claudius in historical writing and the archaeological record

The first reference to the Temple of Claudius in Roman sources comes from Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*: "... He [Claudius] wants to become a god, does he? Isn't it enough for him to have a temple in Britain, have savages worship him, and pray they'll find him a Merciful Clod."[508] This text would have been well known in the Middle Ages, but it does not specifically identify the Temple of Claudius at Colchester as the one described, and medieval compilers of the town's Roman history appear to have been unaware of the function of the building as a Roman temple (see below). Tacitus provides a reference to the Temple of Claudius at Colchester in Roman

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[508] Seneca, *The Apocolocyntosis*. viii, 3

sources when he discusses the settlement at Colchester and the Boudiccan rebellion: "A temple also erected to the Divine Claudius was ever before their eyes, a citadel, as it seemed, of perpetual tyranny."[509] Tacitus proceeds to describe the attack upon the citizens of Colchester, and their refuge in the temple building:

> "Trusting to the protection of the temple, hindered too by secret accomplices in the revolt, who embarrassed their plans, they had constructed neither fosse nor rampart; nor had they removed their old men and women, leaving their youth alone to face the foe. Surprised, as it were, in the midst of peace, they were surrounded by an immense host of the barbarians. All else was plundered or fired in the onslaught; the temple where the soldiers had assembled, was stormed after a two days' siege."[510]

Unlike Seneca however, Tacitus was not well known in the middle ages, especially not in Britain.[511] As such, medieval authors must have derived their knowledge about the Temple of Claudius from other sources, and Roman source material about the Temple of Claudius and its original function is not likely to have been known to the later medieval builders.

The Temple of Claudius was the centre of the Roman imperial cult in Britain, and had three distinct phases of construction. The Romans, like the Normans after them, recognised the strategic and geographically convenient location of Colchester. The first came in the transitional period of the town, where the fortress annexe, which previously housed stores and an auxiliary fortress bath,[512] was converted into part of the eastern street grid. The earliest date given for the construction of the temple can be ascertained by the posthumous dedication circa 54AD to the deified Emperor Claudius, mentioned by Tacitus.[513] Prior to this, the annexe had contained an altar to Rome and Augustus since 49AD, but the location of the altar and the first Temple of Claudius are unknown.[514] During the sacking of the town by Boudiccan forces in c61AD, the town's soldiers took refuge in the temple complex, where they were besieged for two days and eventually killed.[515] The reconstruction of a new temple would have been of utmost priority following the Boudiccan rebellion.

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[509] Tacitus, *Annals*. 14.31.

[510] Tacitus, *Annals*. 14.32.

[511] F. Haverfield, 'Tacitus during the Late Roman Period and the Middle Ages', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 6. (1916): 200.

[512] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 10.

[513] Duncan Fishwick discusses this, in 'The Provincial Centre at Camulodunum: Towards an Historical Context', *Britannia*, Volume 28 (1997): 31.

[514] P.J Drury, J. Bayley, T.F.C Blagg, et al. 'The Temple of Claudius Reconsidered', *Britannia*, Volume 15 (1994): pp 7-50.

[515] Tacitus, *Annals* 14:32

The post-Boudiccan temple was the first large masonry version of the building, which rested on a concrete podium visible under Colchester Keep today (see Figure 122). This podium consists of a large portion of concrete masonry with two barrel vaults running along the underside. During excavations c1920, Mortimer Wheeler and D. Laver were the first people to realise that the vaults under the castle were originally part of a Roman building (see Figures 123 and 124).[516] The plan of the temple can be ascertained by the shape of the foundations. It would have featured a large room or *cella* flanked by a row of columns down each side. At the front of the *cella* was an open-air area, or *pronaos*, which was bordered by double columns down each side, and a single row of eight columns at the front.

A set of steps led down the front towards an area which most likely contained a large altar,[517] and there was a separate area to the south of the temple, known as the *temenos.* This area was still considered part of the temple complex, and influenced the development of later topography.[518] The Temple of Claudius would have stood 20 metres tall, including the exposed part of the podium.[519] It was constructed primarily out of brick and septaria, which would have been faced with a thin cladding of plaster, stone or marble. The columns were also made of brick rendered with plaster, and given plaster moulding capitals and bases.[520] The builders of the Norman keep may have directly re-used collapsed masonry from the temple when constructing the brick and flint Norman keep.

The temple underwent a series of renovations in the fourth century, when a large addition to the front of the temple was made. This can be understood by the construction of a wall, two metres thick, along the line of the bottom of the podium steps. North of this wall lies a massive raft of tile fragments in grey mortar, which also had pieces of column tiles from the demolished temple façade.[521] This raft most likely supported a new section of the temple building, and has had limited excavations carried out at its eastern end. The end of this architectural section terminates in an apse, which is surrounded by the line of the Norman walls. It is not clear to which purpose this renovated building was put, but it is likely that it was converted from a temple to the Roman imperial cult into a large secular hall or a basilica. Using a contemporary continental example, Paul Drury proposes that the fourth-century addition primarily comprises an entrance hall

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[516] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town,* 59.

[517] Drury et al., 'The Temple of Claudius Reconsidered', 25; Fishwick, 'The Provincial Centre at Camulodunum: Towards an Historical Context', 43.

[518] For a discussion of this, see Fishwick, 'The Provincial Centre at Camulodunum: Towards an Historical Context', 34-36.

[519] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 60.

[520] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 60.

[521] Drury et al. 'The Temple of Claudius Reconsidered', 31.

attached to the main hall, but does not postulate who may have used such a building.[522] The shape of these underlying fourth-century extensions provides the impetus for the adoption of the apsidal chapel projection of the later Norman castle. Understanding the influence of the underlying Roman plan is vitally important given the very early date of Colchester Keep, which in turn influenced the shape and construction techniques of other Norman castles across England.

5.3.2 Colchester Castle in historical writing and the archaeological record

Colchester Castle, constructed in stone following the Conquest, was preceded only by the White Tower. Colchester castle was commissioned by William the Conqueror, designed by Bishop Gundulf of Rochester, and overseen and patronised by Eudo Dapifer. Throughout its construction, the keep also had the benefaction of William Rufus and Henry I. This links the keep with some of the most important members of the Anglo-Norman elite. The location of the castle would also have been of considerable defensible importance, guarding the eastern part of England and the coast of Essex. This is reflected in the sheer size of the initial plans for the building, which for the most part were eventually realised. Colchester Keep measures 34 metres by 46.5 metres, making it a third larger than the White Tower of London, and the largest Norman keep in existence (see Figure 125). Colchester Keep is constructed almost entirely out of re-used Roman brick and flint, with a small amount of Caen stone for decorative emphasis around major entrances. It is a three-floored building, with a tower on each corner and an apsidal protrusion at the south east corner which houses a chapel with accompanying crypt and sub-crypt at lower levels (Figures 126 and 127).

Colchester castle follows the design of the less common 'hall keeps' as opposed to the 'tower keeps', of the Norman period.[523] These are characterised by being broader rather than tall, and have links with tenth-century, late-Carolingian fortified palaces in Northern France.[524] Other Norman examples of this keep type can be seen in Normandy at Ivry-la-Bataille, and in England at the White Tower of London.[525] This form implies the first uses of the castle as a luxury residence, rather than simply as a fortified place of refuge. Colchester castle was constructed in several phases, which is the subject of ongoing investigation in comparison with the White Tower of

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[522] Drury et al. 'The Temple of Claudius Reconsidered', 33.

[523] James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner. 'Colchester Castle' in *The Buildings of Essex*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 272.

[524] P.J Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle', *Archaeological Journal,* Volume 139, (1982): 391.

[525] See below for further description of the relationship between The White Tower, Colchester, and Ivry-la-Bataille. Edward Impey. *The White Tower,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 240.

London. It is possible to see the first phase of building by a line of battlement in the brickwork just above the top of the ground floor level (see Figures 128 and 129). Crummy posits that construction was halted at this stage and the building was quickly fortified in response to the Danish rebellion of 1075. Construction was then resumed in 1076, with the original intention to build a castle with four floors. Once the first floor was completed, the Norman builders altered their plans, presumably as a result of a lack of building material. The keep was then built with the top stage omitted, with the great hall constructed on the first floor, and the originally intended crypt of the chapel became the main chapel area.[526] The entrance was also moved from the north side to the south side of the building, and furnished with a decorated stone doorway built from Caen stone (Figure 130). The keep was completed in 1080, and the castle was granted to Eudo Dapifer by Henry I in a charter of 1101.

The castle lies neither near one of the town's entrances, nor the highest point of the town, which is not unusual for a defensive fortification of this period, but still impractical.[527] Thus, it becomes increasingly clear that the site for Colchester Castle was selected on the basis of both practical and meaningful factors. The choice of position for the castle was dictated in large part by the availability of open space within the town walls of Colchester and the location of the podium foundation. The temple precinct was already part of a royal holding prior to the Conquest, and therefore the Norman builders did not need to clear private tenements in order to construct the castle. This land may have been allocated as a royal manor, or *villa regalis,* in the late-Saxon replanning of the town, as there is no evidence for the destruction of tenements in the area during the construction of the castle.

The royal possession of the castle area prior to the Conquest may also have provided additional impetus for the choice of site, which may suggest that the site was already imbued with *romanitas* prior to the Conquest according to Anglo-Saxon re-use traditions. A ditch and rampart was still required around the castle and this would have had to be dug, even though a curtain wall was not required. It was also already enclosed by well-fortified town walls.[528] However, significant clearing of the podium itself was required, which would have required considerably more effort than building on a cleared site. However, when the base of the temple was cleared of the ruined remains of the Roman building, this material would have been incorporated into the later castle walls. The usable stone would have been stripped of the Roman mortar, and retained for the

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[526] For an excellent summary of the construction phases of the castle, please see Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 147. Crummy includes pictorial representations to accompany his description of the building phasing.

[527] Bettley and Pevsner, 'Colchester Castle', 273.

[528] Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle': 390.

building of the Norman keep.[529] This nullifies the choice to re-use the site on the primary basis of ease of access.

The position of the podium was already a significant part of the town's topographical consciousness, and the massive ruin of the Roman temple was suitably impressive to inspire the decision to use it as foundations for the Norman castle. The Norman builders were convinced of the structural integrity of the foundation, and believed it to be solid rather than composed of two massive barrel vaults, because they built the main internal load-bearing wall across the middle of it (see Figures 131 and 132). Despite this, the builders chose not to build the main outer walls of the castle on top of the podium, which would have sat on the thickest parts of the foundation. Instead, the outer walls of the keep directly clasp the sides of the foundation on the east, north and west sides (see Figure 133).[530] On the south side, the outer wall was set away from the temple podium in order to clear the front steps of the temple podium and to sink the castle well.[531]

The size of the castle around the podium meant that the Norman building required considerably larger amounts of building stone than any other contemporaneous castle in England. This does not fit with an explanation for using the podium as a way of cutting material costs or for other practical purposes. It appears that the Norman builders intended to enclose the foundations completely as an attempt to protect and contain them within the later Norman keep. An alternative explanation may lie in an attempt to completely hide the Roman remains from view, asserting Norman monumentalism over the ancient remains. The Roman foundations of the Temple of Claudius clearly had intense cultural significance in the life of the town, and their re-use conveyed a sense of the distant past. The re-use of the Temple of Claudius as the foundations of the Norman castle presented the builders with several challenging impracticalities. However, the decision to build here can only be regarded as significant and meaningful deference to the Roman origins of the podium. Not only that, the complete enclosure of Roman remains emphasised the importance of Colchester's civic identity, as well as asserted that the Norman builders were, not only heirs to Roman imperialism, but that they surpassed it.

The fourth-century apsidal addition also had significant repercussions for the plan of the keep, which may have in turn altered the layout of the contemporaneous White Tower of London. Both of these castles are large square keeps, and the unusual apsidal projection at the south-east corner housed the different levels of the chapel structure. By adhering to the Roman plan and building around the fourth century Roman tile-raft, Norman builders created the shape of the unusual apsed tower, meaning that Colchester Castle may have been the first of the two

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[529] Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle': 391.

[530] Drury et al. 'The Temple of Claudius Reconsidered', 31.

[531] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*,143.

buildings.[532] Drury states that "The great bulk of this tower is not reflected in the north-east or north-west towers of the castle, nor indeed, in any contemporary English keep."[533] The added apse became the formative feature of the Norman castle chapel.[534] The dates for the construction of both Colchester Keep and the White Tower are not firmly established, and rely upon conjecture from documentary sources. The construction of the White Tower is normally calculated based upon the involvement of Bishop Gundulf, following his appointment to the bishopric of Rochester in 1077.[535] The documentary evidence therefore suggests Gundulf's involvement no earlier than 1078, and the normally accepted date of the first phase of construction ranges from 1075-1079.[536]

If Colchester Castle was supposedly started in 1076 (according to the *Annales Colcestriensis*), then it is entirely possible that Colchester Castle was begun before the White Tower, and influenced the initial planning of the design. As Bishop Gundulf oversaw the construction of both castles (see 5.3.3), he may have influenced the designs of their plans at any stage during the first phase of building. However there is the possibility that Colchester and the White Tower were both influenced by the earlier Norman model at Ivry-la-Bataille.[537] It is important not to view the connection with Gundulf in an overly positivist way, as the modern understanding of architect may differ markedly from that of the late-eleventh century. However, a case for the involvement of the bishop can be made, based upon comparative studies of related building projects.[538] Unfortunately, Gundulf's early Norman keep at Rochester was replaced not long after 1127, as it may have offered more clues as to the precise similarities in the construction of keeps overseen by the bishop.

Early excavators at the White Tower noted that the foundations where the apse joins the east wall were not uniform, showing a slight variation in the coursing at the junction.[539] This may

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[532] Drury and Eric Fernie are proponents of this theory, however Drury has apparently "revised this opinion" in personal communication with Edward Impey.

[533] Drury et al. 'The Temple of Claudius Reconsidered', 25.

[534] Please note that Drury's excavations were not sufficiently extensive to determine that the Norman walls completely enclose the fourth century apse. Impey cites Drury's personal uncertainty about inconclusive findings of the excavation; however, none of this material is yet published, so we must still accept Drury's initial assessment.

[535] According to the *Textus Roffensis*, a cartulary composed at Rochester in the 1120s.

[536] Roland B. Harris, *The White Tower,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 41-44.

[537] Edward Impey remains convinced that it was this structure, built circa 1000, and not Colchester Castle which provided the main impetus for the design of the White Tower. However, he concedes that perhaps the innovation for the south-eastern apsidal tower may have developed independently at Colchester and acknowledges the apparent import of Colchester in the design of the White Tower. Impey. *The White Tower*, 239-241.

[538] Impey. *The White Tower,* 43-45.

[539] Impey. *The White Tower,* 64.

indicate the later addition of the foundations of the apse, derived from modelling the plan of Colchester Castle at a time after the initial planning of the White Tower.[540] If this is the case, then the specific re-use of Roman building materials influenced the plan and development of two of the greatest Norman keeps in England.[541] In all, the relationship between the design and architects of Colchester Keep and the White Tower is complex and problematic. It is clear that each keep shares similarities, with the unusual south-east apsidal chapel tower, a similar timescale and timetable for construction, as well as rubble construction methods and similar rounded niches near the entrances.[542] Regardless of the later influence on the White Tower, it remains clear that the Roman foundation underneath Colchester Keep profoundly influenced the initial choice to build there, as well as the size and shape of the resultant Norman castle.

Colchester castle is constructed almost wholly out of large amounts of salvaged Roman building material which may have come from all over the town, but mainly from the monumental buildings in its immediate vicinity — such as the theatre, temple and Roman walls. Some of it may also have been salvaged from the forum and basilica complex further to the east. Colchester castle required at least 25,000 cubic metres of building stone and mortar, which was twice as much as was needed for the White Tower.[543] The sheer quantity of material required for the castle would have taken years to salvage, and the fact that the design was changed after the first phase of building meant that the town's supply of Roman building material was clearly exhaustible.[544] The original plan for a fourth floor to the castle was most likely abandoned as a result of the size of the keep and the scarcity of building material.

Certain types of Roman building material at Colchester Castle were salvaged and re-used for the specific function they could perform. The quoins in the lower section of the exterior walls (i.e. from the first phase of building) derive from dressed limestone blocks from the piers of the screen which divided the Roman temple complex from the street (Figures 134 and 135).[545] The foundations on the west side of the Norman keep contain neatly arranged blocks of stone of the

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[540] Drury et al. 'The Temple of Claudius Reconsidered', 319.

[541] However, these variations may be purely coincidental as the existing plinth and buttress arrangement suggest that the apse was planned as one continuous whole with the rest of the keep, not a later addition. Having examined the buttress arrangement, I can see no reason why a later addition of the apse would have affected the spacing of buttresses on the east wall. Concerning the plinth, the excavations of this (conducted in 1955-1956, and 1965) also appear inconclusive, and it is not completely clear how, and on what time-scale, the plinth relates to the apse and foundations. It is also possible that changes to the plan of the White Tower may also have been made prior to the completion of the foundations or plinth.

Impey. *The White Tower,* 48.

[543] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town,* 143.

[544] M.R. Hull, 'Observations on the Keep' in Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle': 317-323.

[545] Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle': 319.

Roman *petit appareil* size and shape, common in Roman building visible around the town (Figure 136). Very little workable building stone can be found at Colchester, so the useful shape of these Roman *septaria* would have been prized spolia for the Norman keep, demonstrated by their inclusion in a part of the building that required carefully constructed lines of masonry for foundational support. In the main staircase of the castle, Roman *tegulae* were laid flat to form the treads of stairs (Figure 137). These hard wearing terracotta tiles were selected for their ability to withstand generations of footfall. These examples demonstrate the conscious choices made when selecting material for re-use. Although selected for practical purposes, this was done with conscious intention about their potential in the translated setting, showing that casual and meaningful re-use were not often clear-cut.

To mark the top of the first phase of building, a line of tiles are set upright in the face of the wall (Figure 138). These are clearly Roman tiles, and can also be seen dispersed in bands throughout the walls of the keep. This banding constitutes a large part of the decorative scheme adopted at Colchester castle, where the first phase of building contains the most careful decorative work (see Figures 139 and 140). Both Abigail Wheatley and Tim Eaton discuss the adoption of this decorative technique in relation to Chepstow as well as Colchester, where they argue that the tile banding in medieval castles occurs consistently near Roman remains.[546] Wheatley also draws a parallel at Dover Castle, where Roman tile banding may have influenced the decision to construct the castle out of alternating dark and light bands of ashlar. Wheatley states that:

> "tiles are not in themselves particularly decorative or precious, but they must have been perceived as being so, to be used in this way on a prestigious building... the Norman builders appreciated the Roman associations of the tiles, and endeavoured to use them in such a way as to show off the tiles, and perhaps to reflect in some degree the tile courses used in Roman architecture.[547]

When examining the standing remains of the Roman walls at Colchester, it becomes clear that polychromic banding was emulated in the decorative scheme at the castle, where flint *septaria* is interspersed with layers of tile (Figure 141). The Roman walls at Colchester would have been copied for their association with the prestige and imperial authority of classical Rome, but it is also highly likely that this symbolic decorative technique was known from other former Roman towns around England. We have already witnessed the emulation of tile banding at St Albans, however, Colchester Castle, due to its massive scale and royal patronage provides us with

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[546] Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England*, 128; Eaton, 'Counting the cost at Chepstow', 31-57.

[547] Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England*, 128-129.

an example of Roman architectural symbolism which could be directly linked to the Norman kings.

Most upstanding Roman remains at Colchester would have been demolished by the early twelfth century to provide stone for the keep and other Norman buildings.[548] When we consider that there would have been a great deal more standing Roman masonry observable at the time that the castle was built, Roman decorative styles would have been even more visible and prevalent than they are today. The main internal dividing wall of Colchester Castle, many of the internal fireplaces and other places around the castle make heavy use of polychromy and herringbone masonry, built using re-used Roman bricks (Figures 142, 143, 144, 145 and 146).[549] Herringbone masonry is a common feature in the flooring and decoration of Roman buildings, and it is also used extensively in Anglo-Saxon buildings. However, after the first phase of building, at the second and third floors which were built prior to the turn of the twelfth-century, polychromic banding and herringbone becomes less obvious. It seems that the technique fell out of use in the later period of building, indicating that the initial royal post-Conquest plans had stronger links with the selection of Roman building material and its use in a deliberately decorative manner. This supports the assertion that the initial polychromic banding on Colchester Keep was part of an elaborate and complex aesthetic which referenced the power of the Roman emperors.

Early references to Colchester Castle come from several sources which are closely linked with the castle's patron, Eudo Dapifer, his foundation of the Abbey of St John's at Colchester, and the refoundation of the chapel of St Helen. These links recur throughout the history of all three buildings, and Eudo's patronage of all three results in close textual involvement. The earliest references to Colchester Keep derive from a series of charters collated at the monastery of St John during the reign of Henry III, which contains a wealth of information relating to the town.[550] A charter from 1101 contains the passage:

"Sciatis me dedisse benigne et ad amorem concessisse Eudoni dapifero ,eo civitatem Colecestria et turrum et castellum et omnes ejusdem civitatis firmitates cum omnibus que ad illam pertinent sicut pater meus et frater et ego eam melius habuimus unquam."[551]

[Let it be known, I will bestow kindly and grant with love to Eudo Dapifer, that city of Colchester and the keep and bailey and the fortifications of that city with all included, and

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[548] Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle': 387.

[549] Bettley and Pevsner, 'Colchester Castle' 274.

[550] This cartulary was edited by Stuart A. Moore, *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Johannis Baptiste de Colcestria*, London, Chiswick Press, 1897.

[551] From a charter of Henry I granting Colchester to Eudo Dapifer, f 92, reproduced in Moore, *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Johannis Baptiste de Colcestria*, 27.

to him extend these, just as my father and my brother and I have rightly held (these) for all time.][552]

This charter represents an original grant to Eudo Dapifer, which gave him control of the city of Colchester, including the keep and castle area. It was granted following Eudo's construction of the keep throughout the late-eleventh century, and lists all of the major buildings bestowed upon Eudo.

The charter unsurprisingly contains little further information on the buildings themselves, but one must note the inclusion of not only the keep and bailey, but the surrounding fortifications of the city. The city walls were obviously of enough defensive importance to include them in a list of Colchester's assets as a gift from the king, showing that the castle and the town shared a close relationship, perhaps based upon their shared Roman heritage. The date of this charter also provides a concrete date for the completion of the castle and surrounding bailey by 1101. Eudo Dapifer is mentioned in many of the other charters composed at St John's in the twelfth-century, which demonstrates the influence and tenurial holdings he had in the town (See section 4.3.3). Unfortunately, no other charters mention aspects of the town's Roman history or re-use, so they are not particularly useful for any further consideration of Eudo's role in this process.

Despite the dearth of evidence on re-use in the charters produced at St John's, other sources reveal compelling information about how Roman buildings and the process of re-use were perceived in the twelfth-century. The *Annales Colcestriensis*[553] was collated from several sources, one of which was a lost Annals of St John, compiled approximately from 1095 to1177.[554] Entries for the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries from this chronicle are as follows:

"1175   The castle of Colchester, with 1,115 castles of England, is almost destroyed.

 1071   Colchester, after the wives of the citizens had been outraged [*raptis* - carried off as booty, plundered], was burnt by Danish pirates.

 1072   William the Conqueror, on account of this, granted Colchester to Eudo Dapifer.

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[552] Own translation.

[553] There are three extant versions of this text, two of which date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and derive from records made at the monastery of St John's. For a detailed analysis of the development of the Colchester chronicle, see Nina Crummy, *'The Colchester Chronicle'* in Phillip Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester: Colchester Archaeology Report 1*,(London: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1981), 26-27. The copy I have drawn from for the purpose of this analysis is the fourteenth century copy known as the Red *Oath Book of Colchester*. Stephenson posits that the *Annales Colcestriensis* most likely derived from the St John's Annals, so despite the Oath Book's later date, its source was twelfth-century. Please also note that the chronicle entries do not run in chronological order.

[554] See Stephenson's 'An analysis of the chronicle accounts of the foundation and early history of St John's Abbey' in Phillip Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester: Colchester Archaeology Report 1*, (London: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1981), 28-30.

1076　Eudo Dapifer built the castle of Colchester on the foundation of the palace   of Coel, formerly King, and restored [*renovavit* - renewed, revived] the chapel of St Helen which, as it   is said, she herself built and dedicated to St John.

1239　Which chapel was dedicated on St Katherine's day, in honour of St Katherine and St Helen, by Roger, Bishop of London, in the presence of William, abbot of St John.

1089　King William, the younger, gave [to Eudo] the city of Colchester, with the castle, to possess in perpetuity, et cetera."[555]

These chronicle entries raise several important points. Firstly, the castle of Colchester was built in response to a Danish raid in 1071 and immediately following this, the stewardship of the town was granted to Eudo Dapifer. Archaeological evidence supports this chronology of the castle building, as the Danish rebellion of 1075 may explain why work on the castle was halted and a temporary battlement fortified the castle at first floor level.[556] This pause in construction may also relate to the availability of building stone, as greater resources of local Roman stone might have had to be collected to provide for the ambitious size of the keep.[557] Despite archaeological evidence corroborating the break in building to fend off a late eleventh-century Danish raid, the building of the castle in 1076 should not necessarily be taken literally. This date may indicate the starting date for the construction of the castle, just as much as the finish date or the completion of the temporary fortification at first floor level. One thing remains clear: Eudo Dapifer was given responsibility for the construction of Colchester castle as a result of the threat to Anglo-Norman primacy following the Conquest.

The entry relating to 1076 tells of Eudo's construction of the castle "on the foundation of the palace of Coel." This clearly identifies the Roman origins of the foundations, or at the very least, that they derived from the distant past, but it fails to understand their original purpose as the Temple of Claudius. The myth of Coel, the late Roman King at Colchester, had clearly entered the town's historical consciousness and became the means to legitimate remains of antiquity. The story of Coel was re-used just as much as the physical remains and reference to his kingship appears to bestow some authority upon their re-use. To the medieval mind, the foundations of the lavish palace of late-Roman historical figures were subsumed by the Norman building project. The chronicle also contains reference to the restoration of the chapel of St Helen, purportedly built by the saint and dedicated to St John. This connection between the castle, St John's and St

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[555] Entries according to the *Red Oath Book*, the fourteenth century copy of the *Annales Colcestriensis,* f 20 (ii), in Benham, W. Gurney, *The oath book; or, Red parchment book of Colchester*, Essex County Standard Office, Colchester, 1907.

[556] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 145.

[557] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 148.

Helen's chapel confirms Eudo as founder, refounder or builder of all three. As the annal originally derived from the twelfth-century records of St John's — Colchester's principal monastic house which was also founded by Eudo — any connection to the castle and St Helen would have increased the prestige of the monastery.

An earlier part of this chronicle related a detailed account of the Roman saint and historical figures associated with her life, so later references to the castle were inherently tied to the myth of Helena in the writings of the monks of St John's.[558] The entry in the *Annales Colcestriensis* from 1086 where William the Younger (i.e. William Rufus) granted the entire city of Colchester, including the castle, to possess in perpetuity, echoes the 1101 charter by Henry I in which Eudo was granted the town. However, in the 1101 charter, this was to revert to the king upon Eudo's death.[559] No such account of this grant in perpetuity exists elsewhere, rendering it invalid. This entry may have been an attempt to increase the prestige of Eudo and demonstrate his primacy in the town's history, and demonstrates the way in which Eudo was shown favour by the Anglo-Norman kings through the award of important urban holdings and fortifications. The foundation of the castle and the patronage of Eudo Dapifer show how re-use functioned on several levels across several sites in the town. Re-use at Colchester was a pervasive and culturally compelling phenomenon which made explicit reference to Roman imperial power in the twelfth-century.

5.3.3 Patronage and re-use at Colchester Castle

For a full understanding of re-use at Colchester, we must consider all of the people involved in the construction of the town's major buildings. These include the supposed architect of Colchester Castle, Bishop Gundulf of Rochester, and the local patron, Eudo Dapifer, both of whom were prominent members of the early Anglo-Norman elite. Bishop Gundulf followed Lanfranc from Caen and acted as a coadjutor in the administration of Canterbury. He was a competent administrator of early Anglo-Norman rule and was often trusted with large-scale building

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[558] Nina Crummy has suggested that this chronicle was compiled to mark the rededication of St Helen's in 1239. This is the last chronological entry in the annals, and would have been an important occasion for the monastery of St John's (as it was given jurisdiction over the chapel at some point in the twelfth-century), which is where the annals were compiled. This would explain the lengthy description of the saint's life earlier in the annals, as well as highlighting the ties between the castle and St John's. Nina Crummy, *'The Colchester Chronicle'* in Phillip Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester*, 26-27.

[559] A charter from 1091 possibly matches this entry, but this is a copy of the 1101 charter of Henry I and no grant was made by William Rufus. H.M. Colvin, A.J. Taylor, R.A. Brown, *History of the King's Works,* Volume One, (Great Britain: Ministry of Public Building and Works, 1963), 31n.

projects.[560] Gundulf's buildings were notably of rubble construction, compared with the contemporaneous ashlar buildings of other architects.[561] This suggests that he had a particular preoccupation with the re-use of Roman remains, constructed as rubble buildings.

Gundulf may have also formed relationships with master masons and builders which had involvement across multiple sites, further cementing the trend to build in Roman rubble.[562] Bishop Gundulf's involvement with the castle is currently speculative, based on architectural similarities between Colchester Castle and the White Tower of London, for which he was responsible for the design. Gundulf's influence as an architect and overseer of royal building programs may range from a minimalist supervisory role, to an inherently large involvement in the planning of each building; he may have had a large part in planning Colchester Castle.[563] According to the obits of St John's, composed between 1140 and 1380, Gundulf and Eudo Dapifer were "friends."[564] We also know that Eudo requested monks from Rochester (Gundulf's own monastery) during his foundation of St John's at Colchester. It seems likely that the two were acquainted beyond association with the castle, and may have had a shared interest in the re-use of Roman material culture.

Eudo Dapifer's patronage, construction and renovation of several religious buildings in the town, and his position as steward then later lord of Colchester, meant that he played an important part in the culture of re-use witnessed in the town. Most importantly Eudo was responsible for overseeing the construction of Colchester Castle, and in his capacity as steward to William I, William Rufus, and Henry I, Eudo was also responsible for administrating royal interests in Colchester. Eudo Dapifer (sometimes known as Eudo Fitzherbert or Eudo de Rie) was the son of Hubert de Rie who accompanied the Conqueror on his invasion into England with four of his sons.[565] Following the Conquest, Eudo's family rose to a position of prominence.[566] Eudo was in

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[560] Guldulf was responsible for the construction of Rochester Castle, as well as the Romanesque Rochester Cathedral. Paul Drury, *Rochester Castle Conservation Plan Part 1,* Understanding and Significance, (Teddington: The Paul Drury Partnership, 2009), 1-100; John Philip McAleer, *Rochester Cathedral 604-1540: An architectural history,* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

[561] Such as The Tower of London, and Dover Castle. Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, 283.

[562] Impey. *The White Tower,* 45.

[563] Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, p 283.

[564] George Rickword 'The Obits of the Abbots of Colchester', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, volume 17, (1923): 123.

[565] Stuart A. Moore, 'Introduction', *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Johannis Baptiste de Colcestria*, (London, Chiswick Press, 1897), xiii.

[566] Eudo's brother Hubert was under-keeper of Norwich castle, Ralph was castellan at Nottingham, Adam held large estates in Kent, and Eudo had grants of sixty-four manors in the eastern counties, of which twenty-five were in Essex. Another brother, Robert was made Bishop of Séez and Eudo's two sisters both made important matches. Moore, 'Introduction', xiii.

Rouen when William I died and secured the royal castles of Dover, Pevensey and Hastings for the new king, William II of England.[567] Eudo was steward to William II, and also witnessed charters and served in the royal household. Eudo was one of the witnesses to Henry's coronation charter, issued shortly after his coronation in August 1100.[568]

According to the Domesday survey of Colchester, Eudo held five houses, forty acres and a fourth part of St Peter's church by 1086.[569] In 1095 he founded the Abbey of St John's in Colchester, which became the principal monastic house in the town.[570] In 1101, Eudo was granted control of the town of Colchester by Henry I, which demonstrates the support he gave to a succession of English kings following the Conquest.[571] Eudo died at the castle of Preux in Normandy, and his remains were transported and interred at St John's Abbey in February, 1120.[572] Eudo held a fairly unique role in the post-Conquest political landscape. As steward of Colchester, he must have gained the trust of the king, resulting in the reward of his various estates. However, this was not a permanent familial arrangement, as his property (including that in Colchester) reverted to the crown upon his death.[573] Eudo instigated the large scale re-use of Roman remains at Colchester Castle, and this must also have been the preferred building material at St John's abbey.

These various building projects mark Gundulf and Eudo as some of the only identifiable historical personages who actively promoted a programme of re-use. This ambition was manifested in the re-use of building materials, significant Roman sites, and decorative schemes which directly referenced Roman remains. It is rare to know so much about the history of immediately post-Conquest buildings, so Colchester allows us to see how historical figures influenced, and were influenced in turn, by the use of Roman material culture. Colchester's material history demonstrates a complex relationship between steward, architect, and king, all of

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[567] Much of the information on Eudo's life comes from the account of the foundation of St John's, provided in the Nero text, British Library MS Nero D viii, in H. J. Duckinfield Astley, 'Medieval Colchester—Town, Castle and Abbey—from MSS. in the British Museum', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society,* viii (1903): 117-138. This information is generally accepted as truthful by secondary scholars on the reign of the early Norman Kings.

[568] Judith A. Green. *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 49.

[569] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 144.

[570] This will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, but there are four accounts of Eudo's foundation of St John's Abbey which can be found in Stephenson's 'An analysis of the chronicle accounts of the foundation and early history of St John's Abbey' in Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester,* 28-30.

[571] See below for a discussion of the 1101 charter of Henry I which can be found in Moore, *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Johannis Baptiste de Colcestria*, 27.

[572] Astley, 'Medieval Colchester—Town, Castle and Abbey—from MSS. in the British Museum', 134.

[573] Astley, 'Medieval Colchester—Town, Castle and Abbey—from MSS. in the British Museum', 134.

whom originated from the highest levels of Norman power, all who came from Normandy itself, and all who were involved as part of the initial process of colonisation that took place in England. The need to establish control in England following the Conquest meant these members of the elite drew upon the adoption of Anglo-Saxon re-use practices, which were then reworked with a monumental, Norman approach.

The emulation of Roman decorative techniques such as polychromy and herringbone in Colchester Keep, the re-use of the site and foundations of the theatre and Roman podium, and the translation of Roman building material, often with specific purposes in mind, may have been deliberately referential to existing Roman remains and the impression of longevity and imperial power that they conveyed. This may have been an intentional and meaningful reference by its patron and architect on the orders of the king, to create a monumental keep as a statement of power from re-used Roman remains. Colchester Castle may have been part of a wider Norman policy and strategy of conquest, in its earliest phases. It was built over the site of an Anglo-Saxon royal holding, suggesting that Eudo and Gundulf may have been trying to claim superiority over the 'native' Anglo-Saxon populace they encountered after the Conquest. Alternatively, Eudo and Gundulf may have implemented a royal agenda which asserted Norman superiority over the might of the Romans. Not only does this exist in the material record, but historical and chronicle accounts of the material past of Colchester Keep reinforced notions of empire and conquest; not least, the site was claimed as a palace in association with the mythical Roman King Coel and his imperial daughter. The local interest in Roman remains at Colchester created and reinforced the dissemination of ideas about the Roman past on a national level, and formed part of a wider cultural milieu in which the Anglo-Norman elite created their own alternative, and inherently material, imperial state.

5.2 Topography and re-use in the local landscape

5.2.1 Continuity, robbing and decorative emulation of the Roman walls

The Roman walls of Colchester, like those at Chester, survived relatively intact into the Norman period. Originally spanning a length of nearly three kilometres long, the Roman walls were 2.5-3 metres thick and were built from a core of layered flint rubble and mortar, faced with flint and tile coursing.[574] The Roman walls originally had a series of internal towers to guard the ends of streets, and also six gates, including the massive, monumental Balkerne gate at the western side of the town. By the middle ages, the number of gates in the walls was reduced to four- two in the

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[574] Janet Cooper and C.R. Elrington, 'Walls, Gates and Posterns' *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 9, The Borough of Colchester*, (1994): 2-18.

south wall and one in the north and east respectively. All except perhaps the gate in the south wall, which led to St Botolph's, were Roman in origin, which reinforced the continuation of the Roman topography and street plan.[575] In the late-Saxon period, the Balkerne gate was blocked, reducing movement through the town. The written evidence for the late Anglo-Saxon refortification of the walls forms only part of the story of periods of maintenance, robbing and gate closure.

There are parts of the walls which have evidently been restored over successive generations, and show different patches of repair (Figure 107). Some parts of the wall, such as the north-east corner, have even been completely rebuilt complete with medieval buttressing (Figure 108). Others parts of the wall have been robbed back to their internal *septaria*, or rubble and concrete cores, and show very little of the original Roman decoration (Figure 109). However, sections of the walls, particularly in the north and west of the town, are still faced with their original Roman tile and flint striation, which would have been visible in the medieval period (Figures 110). Unlike the town walls at St Albans, the tile lacing does not penetrate the thickness of the wall, and Hull proposes that this decorative facing was added in the late Roman period.[576] The walls would have compared with the third-century city walls of York, both in their impressive size and unmistakably Roman decoration. The elaborate coping stones and cornices of the Chester walls would not have been necessary at Colchester, when such a striking aesthetic effect could be achieved using local flint and tile.

The original line of the Roman wall was respected in both rebuilding and repairs, showing an interest in maintaining the wall in its original form. This was most likely out of a practical need to preserve the town's fortifications against various historical threats such as the Danish invasions of the late-eleventh century, but may also have included a desire to uphold a sense of continuity with the town's defensible capabilities, and a belief in the relative indestructibility of this Roman edifice. In parts of the walls where facing stones and other building material were removed from the surface of the wall, they would have been put to use in later medieval buildings. Not only was the actual building material re-used, but the flint and tile banding construction style of the walls was also copied in the surface decoration of several medieval buildings.

We have already seen at St Albans that this banding was a recognisably Roman decorative style, so the collection and re-use of these materials may have been an attempt by the medieval inhabitants of Colchester to transfer implied meaning into their own buildings. While it is not possible to truly understand the motives behind the mimicry of decoration when re-using Roman

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[575] Cooper and Elrington, 'Walls, Gates and Posterns', 2-18.

[576] M.R. Hull, *Roman Colchester*, (Essex: Colchester City Council, 1958), fig 44, 105; and Phillip Crummy, 'The Roman theatre at Colchester', *Britannia*, Volume 13, (1982): xxix.

building material, it may have been a conscious act that was inspired by a sense of longevity, notions of imperial power, or the emulation of a lost culture. The processes of repairs and continuous use contrast with robbing and decorative emulation, but these occurred at different times in the history of Colchester's town walls. All of these processes form an important series of re-use events, and show a varied interest in and engagement with the Roman past.

5.2.2 Medieval parish churches: Re-use in the local landscape

The medieval parish churches of Colchester were all founded by 1200, and of the ten in or near the city walls, at least six, and probably a further three are pre-Conquest foundations.[577] This begs the question whether Norman rebuilders would have recognised the building stone from Saxon churches as Roman, but considering there were significant amounts of standing Roman remains into the twelfth century, it is likely that people would have noticed the parallel. If not contemporaries had not recognised re-used material as Roman, then re-use in Colchester's parish churches provides us with historically layered re-use practices which gained their meaning through a Saxon the casfilter. There is significant evidence to suggest that they all incorporated Roman remains, and in some cases, there is still visible tile banding used as a decorative scheme. While many of the churches have been rebuilt, or even demolished, all of the parish churches respect the lines of the Roman roads and several were built over large-scale Roman remains (see Figure 111 for the locations of all parish churches in respect to the Roman topography). St Martin's and Holy Trinity are the only two churches set back from the High Street frontage. While this possibly suggests a later foundation than the other churches,[578] it still shows deference to the Roman topography and continual use of the town's Roman points of entry into the town. The church of St James has little surviving medieval fabric (beyond some re-use of Roman brick quoins in the once aisle-less nave area),[579] so it does not have its own discrete section. The Roman remains in the area of St James are also undefined, so it's not possible to see how they affected the later development of this particular parish church. In addition to the churches covered in this section, there were also four suburban parishes which lay outside the town walls — St Giles, within the precinct of St John's; St Botolph's Augustinian priory, which also functioned as a parochial church; St Mary Magdalene, the church which served the leper hospital founded by Eudo

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[577]Janet Cooper and C R Elrington, 'Medieval Colchester: Growth of the town', *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 9: The Borough of Colchester* (1994): 38-47.

[578] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman* Colchester, 74.

[579] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester' in *Historic Churches: A wasting asset. The Council for British Archaeology*, (1977): 34.

Dapifer in the late eleventh century;[580] and St Leonard in the Hythe, near Colchester's medieval river port.[581]

St Peter's parish church was the primary church of Colchester at the time of the Conquest, as it is the only foundation mentioned in Domesday, even though the other churches would most likely also have existed.[582] St Peter's was a prosperous parish with two priests, indicating it was richly endowed by 1086. St Peter's occupies the crown of the hill upon which Colchester stands, at the corner of the junction of the two major Roman streets. The site would have been occupied by a Roman structure of some consequence, such as a temple or other public building of the *colonia*.[583] Prior to this would have stood the *principia* building of the mid first-century military fortress, in exactly the same position of St Peter's at Chester. No full-scale archaeological investigation has been conducted on the site, and while Roman remains have been purportedly discovered, they offer no clue as to the specific nature of the Roman building on the site.[584] The churchyard and original street frontage most likely extended to the High Street, as with the other early foundations in Colchester.[585]

The church may have been rebuilt or renovated in the Anglo-Saxon period, and the current cruciform plan may reflect the Norman phase of the history of St Peter's. When the church was reconstructed and renovated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, significant amounts of Roman brick and flint were incorporated into the fabric of the church,[586] which may have been recovered from earlier phases of the church building (See Figure 112). A 'great stone' on the south side of St Peter's, mentioned in the will of Robert Fraunces in 1501, may also indicate the presence of a Roman milestone in the vicinity of the church.[587] There is considerable evidence for practical Roman re-use at St Peter's church, but its choice of site also reveals a meaningful engagement with the Roman environment.

Holy Trinity church was situated to the south of the High Street, blocking a minor junction on the Roman street grid and effectively altering the post–Roman street layout surrounding the church. The parish boundaries of Holy Trinity appear to overlay those of St Runwald's and St

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[580] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 36.

[581] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman* Colchester, 47.

[582] Cooper and Elrington, 'Medieval Colchester: Growth of the town', 38-47.

[583] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 28.

[584] Hull, *Roman Colchester*, 150.

[585] Cooper and Elrington, 'Medieval Colchester: Growth of the town', 38-47.

[586] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 28.

[587] John Ashdown-Hill, *Medieval Colchester's Lost Landmarks*, (Derby: Breedon Books, 2009), 88.

Peter's, suggesting that this was a late Saxon foundation.[588] However, the addition of the Saxon tower (architecturally dated to around 1000), to the already constructed nave suggests a tenth or eleventh century date for the first church.[589] A comparative example of this tower is the eleventh century St Mary Bishophill Junior in York, as it has the same *opus mixtum* building material and herringbone masonry. Holy Trinity has been considered architecturally important because of this west tower, which has remained relatively unchanged since it was built. This tower features quoins constructed of Roman tile, as well as tile banding interspersed with rubble coursing (Figures 113 and 114). This demonstrates the widespread influence of Roman banded decorative schemes within the town, which will be explored in greater detail in section 5.3. Inside the building an impressive Romanesque arch leads from the tower into the nave. This arch is constructed wholly of Roman tile, specifically collected from a building in the area, and makes clever use of its edges to create moulding and straight lines in an area which has a demonstrable shortage of workable stone (Figures 115 and 116). Holy Trinity reflects a mixture of architectural influences, particularly the re-use of Roman building material, and attempts to emulate Roman decorative techniques while incorporating Romanesque architectural forms.

St Runwald's parish church was demolished in 1878, but the church was once built over Roman *insulae* along the main Roman road, fitting neatly into the corner of two Roman streets.[590] By the High Middle Ages, the church would have stood on an island in the middle of the High Street, following the first period of Anglo-Saxon remodelling from around the tenth century, where a marketplace was opened up at the east end of the church.[591] The church was an intrusion on the existing market place, indicated by its separate graveyard and rectory, akin to St Helen's at York. The parish boundaries also reflect an imposition of St Runwald's into an established townscape, though the dedication to St Runwald, an obscure child saint, suggests this was an Anglo-Saxon foundation.[592] Regardless of the church's precise foundation date, it is known to have stood over the Roman street frontage, and respected the line of existing Roman buildings. Before its demolition, the church was an eleventh/twelfth-century building, featuring coursed flint and

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[588] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman* Colchester, 50.

[589] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', p 32.

[590] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman* Colchester, 49, 50.

[591] Crummy cites this as the major piece of evidence that St Runwald's was the earliest parochial foundation in Colchester, as all of the other parish churches are set back from the High Street or market frontage Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman* Colchester, 74; Ashdown-Hill, *Medieval Colchester's Lost Landmarks*, 90.

[592] It is possible the church may have started life as a 'chapel of ease', only later acquiring parochial and burial rights. Ashdown-Hill, *Medieval Colchester's Lost Landmarks*, 91.

rubble walling.[593] This is similar to the construction techniques at St Helen's chapel in Colchester (see below), and demonstrates the influence of Roman decorative schemes on this parish church.

St Nicholas' parish church was among the first parochial churches founded in Colchester after St Runwald's and St Peter's, and its foundation is likely to date to no later than AD1050.[594] Like St Runwald's, St Nicholas' was built over significant Roman remains. However, no medieval walls directly sat on top of Roman foundations, indicating that all nearby Roman material had been used above ground level in the medieval period.[595] It is also possible that, owing to the church's early foundation, parts of a Roman building may have been integrated into the walls of the church.[596] The church was heavily rebuilt in the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries, so there are no Roman remains evident in the fabric. However, the church was also built on the corner of two Roman streets, so again it would have fit the layout of the Roman town's *insulae.*

All Saints' church, like St Nicholas', occupies the site of the forum basilica complex of the Roman *colonia*, which means that it would probably have incorporated, or been built over Roman walls or foundations.[597] The church lies along the High Street, again suggesting an early foundation. It is possible that the church was a two–cell apsidal church in the Anglo-Saxon period, which had a larger nave added during the Norman period, forming the south side of the church today.[598] When the south wall of the nave was resurfaced in 1855, it replaced a herringbone pattern made in Roman brick,[599] and it is evident that the church walls incorporated large amounts of re-used flint and rubble (see Figure 117). The use of herringbone patterning in the nave wall suggests the prevalence and importance of this Roman decorative technique surviving well beyond the late Saxon period into the twelfth century.

Though set away from the High Street, St Martin's parish church lies over a minor Roman street frontage. The church has been subsequently rebuilt, but the medieval church of St Martin's may have respected the line of this street.[600] According to Domesday, St Martin's was originally an

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[593] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 33.

[594] During excavations of the site following the demolition of the church of St Nicholas in 1955, nine sherds of Thetford ware pottery were found in a pit dug down the side of a Roman wall foundation, these were dated to 1000. However, if this is an original dedication, the cult of St Nicholas did not become popular in north-west Europe until around 1050, so the dedication may date closer to then. Phillip Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester: Colchester Archaeology Report 1*, (London: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1981), 74.

[595] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman* Colchester, 47.

[596] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman* Colchester, 47.

[597] Cooper and Elrington, 'Medieval Colchester: Growth of the town', 8-47.

[598] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 30.

[599] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 30.

[600] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 29.

Anglo-Saxon foundation which was then rebuilt in the Norman period to a cruciform plan.[601] Despite heavy-handed nineteenth century resurfacing, large amounts of re-used Roman tile are still visible in the Norman fabric of St Martin's (Figure 118). Like Holy Trinity, St Martin's west tower is made up primarily of re-used Roman material (Figure 119). Intriguingly, four complete Roman pots were found accompanying post-Roman inhumation burials in the churchyard of St Martin's.[602] The earliest date ascribed to these burials is the fifth century, indicating that the re-use of Roman material culture on the site was occurring from the very earliest period of the Middle Ages.

St Mary's-at-the-Wall was founded by the twelfth-century, and the earliest church may have even been built during the middle Saxon period.[603] It was built against the western wall of the town's defences, and its Anglo-Saxon graveyard extended to the south wall, with ninth-century graves found in this area. No part of the medieval church remains, as the church has been completely rebuilt on successive occasions since the medieval period. It becomes clear when examining the lower part of the large and neatly coursed sixteenth-century tower that a great deal of Roman stone and brick may have been continually re-used in the fabric this church. Roman stones of the *petit appareil* shape appear in a uniform pattern, interspersed with layers of *tegulae* (Figure 120). There is a striking similarity between this decorative style and what can be seen in the Roman town walls and the Balkerne Gate against which St Mary's abuts, which have been considerably stripped of facing material (Figure 121). The medieval church was also built over the top of a substantial Roman town house, and entire Roman pavements were discovered during digging in the graveyard of the church.[604] This building may also have provided an architectural model from which to copy decorative techniques. The location of St Mary's may have been dictated by the large Roman building, from which a great deal of building material was collected and re-used in the medieval church.

5.4 The Roman theatre and St Helen's Chapel

5.4.1 The Roman theatre

The Roman theatre had an enduring impact upon the local landscape of Colchester, particularly on chapel of St Helen which was built over the site in the early Middle Ages. The chapel utilised several parts of the Roman amphitheatre, and may have even emulated the same decorative

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[601] Cooper and Elrington, 'Medieval Colchester: Growth of the town', 38-47.

[602] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 30.

[603] W W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 32.

[604] Hull, *Roman Colchester*, 207-208.

techniques seen at Colchester Castle from the walls of the theatre. St Helen's chapel became the focus for a series of myths concerning the mother of Constantine, St Helena, which was propagated as a legendary aspect of the town's history. Throughout the twelfth century, tales of Helena were disseminated nationally via major chroniclers, marking Colchester as one of the foremost Roman sites in medieval Britain. At Colchester, the relationship between the castle, the chapel, and literary production at the monastery of St John's was deeply grounded in the Roman material culture of the town and helped to cement the primacy of these new Norman institutions. The re-use of Roman material culture salvaged from the underlying theatre promoted Colchester's association with the Romano-British past, expressed via the myth of St Helena.

The Roman theatre at Colchester has only been partly excavated, but enough of the curve of the *cavea* has been uncovered to understand the approximate size and plan of the building (Figures 147, 148 and 149).[605] The Roman theatre was constructed out of flint and *tegulae*, and would have been able to seat 3000 people, about half of the population of the original fortress.[606] The theatre had an inner and an outer curved wall, through which ran a structural corridor (Figures 150 and 151). The well-preserved surface of the floor of this corridor indicates that it was never used as a public thoroughfare.[607] The Roman theatre at Colchester was originally built as part of the annexe complex, which was later incorporated into the plan of the later *colonia*, and was situated next to the Temple of Claudius. The close relationship between the temple and the theatre was later echoed in the relationship between the castle and St Helen's chapel. The presence of the theatre indicated that Colchester was an important Roman town, and the theatre would possibly have stood well into the late Anglo-Saxon period, when the church of St Helena was built. Parts of the theatre not covered by the chapel or incorporated into the chapel may have even stood until the late eleventh-century, when large scale salvaging of building stone to construct the castle and other buildings took place.

Early accounts of St Helen's chapel suggested that this building might have originally been Roman.[608] The restoration of St Helen's chapel in the *Annales Colcestriensis* claimed that the chapel had been built by St Helen herself, during the late-Roman period. Some early archaeologists also claimed that the building might have been a secular Roman building, of unknown use, repurposed as a chapel sometime between the late-Roman period and the late eleventh-century. Both of these scenarios are unlikely, as archaeological evidence has now found that the chapel was built over

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[605] M.R. Hull was the first person to propose that the foundations discovered under Maidenburgh Street were the remains of the theatre, and further excavations were carried out in 1981. Hull, *Roman Colchester* fig 44, 105; and Crummy, 'The Roman theatre at Colchester': 299.

[606] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 58.

[607] Crummy, 'The Roman theatre at Colchester': 301-302.

[608] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 151.

the remains of the Roman theatre, and was therefore not originally a single room building constructed for the purpose of worship. However, as St Helen's is still built over the Roman remains of the theatre, it demonstrates another example of topographical re-use of Roman remains at Colchester. St Helen's chapel was rebuilt on several occasions, as the line of the church wall deviates slightly from the line of the theatre.[609]

St Helen's was a significantly early pre-Conquest foundation which had fallen into disrepair by the late eleventh-century. Considering that several of the town's other parish churches were pre-Conquest, it would not be unusual to suggest that instead of a late-Roman foundation, St Helen's was actually established in the eighth or ninth century at the earliest, during the first phase of Anglo-Saxon replanning at Colchester.[610] This is supported by a possible need to remove the large structure of the theatre, which probably still dominated the standing buildings at the time. However, the chapel may have been established at any point between then and the tenth century. This date range is in accordance with the chapel's dedication to Helena, as the legend was established and propagated in Britain during the Anglo-Saxon period.[611] The first recorded renovation comes again from the *Annales Colcestriensis*, where Eudo was said to have restored (*renovavit*) the chapel of St Helen.

The chapel of St Helen lies a short distance from the castle, on the corner of Maidenburgh Street and St Helen's Lane (Figure 152). It is a small, single celled building — a form which has most likely not changed since the first church was built here. St Helen's chapel incorporated Roman remains in both its north and south walls and it also lies over the north-east side of the theatre.[612] Re-used Roman masonry is still visible at lower levels on the north side of the church (Figure 153). The earliest current fabric of St Helen's dates to a thirteenth century restoration, evident in the windows of the chapel, but the majority of the visible brick work belongs to a nineteenth century refacing.[613] Sadly, the fabric from the twelfth-century has been destroyed, but it is likely that the brick and flint fabric of the church in all restorations since the chapel was constructed would have been sourced from nearby Roman remains (Figure 154). Hence, St Helen's is not only built on the site of the Roman theatre, it incorporated some of these remains *in situ* and was most likely constructed almost entirely out of masonry salvaged from the theatre. These archaeological and architectural conditions acquire intense significance when we come to regard the development of the myth of St Helena at Colchester. The re-use of Roman remains at

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[609] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester,* 47.

[610] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester,* 71.

[611] Antonina Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend*, (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 2002), 34.

[612] Crummy, 'The Roman theatre at Colchester': 301.

[613] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester': 37-38.

this site became part of a prevalent oral, then literary, tradition which linked the town's material history to a legendary Roman figure.

5.4.2 St Helena in the twelfth-century literary tradition

Eudo's supposed late-eleventh century restoration of the chapel of St Helen may have been fabricated by later scribes at St John's, who strove to link St John's, St Helen's, the castle and the Roman history of the town. This particular chronicle also record the gift of St Helen's to St John's in 1095, when St John's was only founded in 1115. Clearly, the later compilers of the annals were eager to make early connections between their own monastery and the prestigious history of the chapel. The supposed foundation of the chapel also had repercussions for the composers of the *Annales,* as the *romanitas* imparted by Helena's early foundation was transferred into the Norman period in a symbolic and literal act of re-use. The account of this foundation may also have something to do with the entire purpose of the document, which may have been compiled to mark the rededication of the chapel in 1239.[614] By this time, St Helen's had passed legitimately to the monastery of St John. If the *Annales Colcestriensis* of St John's was indeed composed following the thirteenth-century reconsecration of the chapel, then later accounts of the saint may have influenced the portrayal of St Helen in the St John's manuscript.

Immediately prior to the account of Eudo's foundation, the *Annales Colcestriensis* also contains a lengthy description of St Helen's life during the Roman period. The account, listed in chronological entries, describes Helen's birth, as well as her betrothal to Constantius to break a three-year siege a Colchester. It discusses her vows of widowhood following the death of her husband, her journey to Jerusalem to recover the cross and her eventual death at the age of eighty years old. This account is a remarkably complete collation of all known facts about St Helen in the medieval period. Most importantly, it mentions the city of Colchester ten times in total, placing great emphasis on the events that occurred there over the course of Helen's life. This account is incredibly important for any study of textual compositions on the myth of St Helen, and shows how later medieval accounts became considerably embellished beyond the facts originally known locally at Colchester.

Myths concerning Helena had been present in Anglo-Saxon England, tailored according to audience and medium, but these early myths did not generally contain accurate biographical information, often featuring Helena as a stable girl from Drepanum.[615] The myth of St Helena

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[614] Crummy, *City of Victory: The story of Colchester, Britain's first Roman town*, 144.

[615] Bede's *Chronica Majora* and the earlier Procopius both mention Helena's origins from this town in Sicily. For an excellent analysis of the earlier and later accounts of Helena's life, see Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend*.

reached its fullest expression in the twelfth-century,[616] primarily through the propagation of Latin chronicles, many of which mention Helena in relation to her British familial heritage and her association with Colchester. By the High Middle Ages, Helena and her son, Constantine the Great, had become symbolic figures which were emblematic of Roman imperialism in English chronicle histories. She was talented and high born, with multiple political roles connecting the emerging British nationhood with its Roman history. The Helena myth glorified the Roman past, and communicated to medieval audiences that Britain had played a vital role in the history of the Roman Empire. The popularity of the story perpetuated into the latter Middle Ages, which shows a particular preoccupation with this aspect of Romano-British history.

Susan Larkin cites three social and political forces which helped shape the Helena myth in the twelfth-century: the growth of nationalism, the rise of romance style and the ramifications of papal politics.[617] Antonina Harbus also cites additional literary forces at work as well as the influence of local traditions.[618] Nationalism and the political conditions of England following the Conquest led to twelfth-century presentations of Helena in Latin chronicles. Some of these show particular interest in Colchester's buildings and material culture, as St Helena's home town became an integral part of the Helena myth. When examining these texts, a recursive cycle of re-use emerges. Colchester appropriated Helena's *romanitas* and *imperium* for authority within locally produced literary texts, and medieval writers used Roman material remains to situate and legitimise Helena's early life in the town. Local literature and material remains feed into the development of these myths, and vice versa.

Several major twelfth-century chroniclers provide various versions of the Helena myth. The exact dates of composition are a matter of contention, as each underwent a series of revisions, but the order of first production is generally accepted as follows: William of Malmesbury *Gesta Regum* (1125, revised to 1135), Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie* (1136-38), and Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* (1131-1154). We know that Geoffrey read Henry, and Henry used Geoffrey when making his extensive revisions, but did not use William of Malmesbury.[619] The interest shown in Helena as a major narrative element within these texts demonstrates the twelfth-century fascination with the Roman past. All contain references to Helena's union with Constantius, and the birth of their son, the Emperor Constantine. Constantine, as a Roman emperor, may have been particularly important in England in the Norman period. Not

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[616] Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend*, 66.

[617] Susan Grace Larkin, *Transitions of Medieval Legends of St Helena,* (unpublished PhD thesis, Indiana University, 1995), 67.

[618] Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend,* 67.

[619] Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend,* 67.

only was he the first Christian emperor, but he was also crowned in Britain, relating directly to Britain's sense of its own Roman past. Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth mention Helen as the daughter of King Cole, which by the twelfth century had become an etymological link with the town of Colchester.[620]

Geoffrey of Monmouth ascribes Helena's origins from Colchester, but makes no mention of the physical description of the city, while Henry of Huntingdon's account of Helena contains the most detailed descriptions of the town:

> "Constantius… accepitque filiam regis Brittanici de Colcestre, cui nomen erat Coel, scilicet Helenam, quam sanctam dicimus"[621] ["Constantius… received in marriage the daughter of Cole, the British king of Colchester, that is Helena whom we call"saint".][622]

Henry also mentioned Helena's construction of several sets of city walls:

> "Helena vero Britannie nobolis alumpna, Lundoniam muro quod adhuc superest cinxisse fertur, et Colcestriam menibus adornasse."[623] [Now Helena, the high-born daughter of Britain, is said to have encircled London with a wall, which is still there, and to have furnished Colchester with town walls.][624]

Henry's Helena was responsible for the construction of several buildings, and most importantly she constructed the Roman walls at London and Colchester which still stood in Henry's day. Construction attributed to mythical or fictional characters is common in the Middle Ages, and was often used to explain the origins of monumental structures from antiquity or outstanding geographical features (Geoffrey of Monmouth commonly uses these types of descriptions). It is important to note that the Roman origins of the city walls would likely have been known, so Henry merely fabricated a connection between Helena and existing traditions concerning Colchester's material remains to lend authority to his story. Hence visible material culture was used to validate Henry's fictional account of Helena, and in return, Colchester's prestige was enhanced by a widely disseminated connection with the Roman saint. The prominence with which material culture enhances the credibility of this story demonstrates the importance of such links in twelfth-century literary production.

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[620] Charles Kightly, *Folk Heroes of Britain*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 1982), 56-93.

[621] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, edited by Diana L. Greenway, (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts, 1996), Book 1.37-8; 58-59.

[622] Translation in Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend,* 74.

[623] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, Book 1.38: 62-63.

[624] Translation in Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend,* 75.

Another account of St Helena linking Colchester with the Roman past describes the foundation of St John's by Eudo Dapifer. This text is of uncertain date, but was most likely produced locally at the Abbey of St John, Colchester, and can be found in British Library MS Nero D viii.[625] Within this text is a short passage which details Colchester's local history, including its location, natural and man-made geographical features, and an explanation for its demise. It also relates the origins of Helena from Colchester as the daughter of Coel, wife of Constantius and mother of Constantine. Most importantly, the text justifies Helena's local origins by the discovery of Roman artefacts at the town:

> "Est igitur Colecstria civitas in orientale parte Britanniae posita. Civitas vicina portui situ ameno fontibus undique scaturientibus irrigua aere saluburrimo menibus firmisissimis, constructa. Civitas inter eminentissimas numeranda si non vetustas, conflagrationes, eluviones, denique piratarum immissiones varieque casuum afflictationes omnia civitatis memorialia delevissent. Traditur tamen Helenam quondam imperii matrem ex hac civitate natam et educatam. Quae quanti fuerit vel eo conicitur quod Constantius Constantini Magni genitor, triennio dicitur hac obsedisse nec optinuisse nisi tandem per Helenae nuptias. Conicitur etiam ex his quae de terra fossores eruerunt tam ferrum quam lapides, quam aera signata quam edificia sub terra inventa."[626]

> ["Colchester is situated in the eastern part of Britain. The city is close to the harbor, pleasantly located, irrigated throughout with spring-waters, with a most wholesome atmosphere, constructed with the strongest fortifications. The city would be numbered amongst the most eminent, had not age, fires, floods, even invasions of pirates and the various ravages of events destroyed all memorials of the city. Indeed, it is related that Helena, later mother of the empire, was born and brought up in this city. It was of great merit, as can be seen from the fact that Constantius, father of Constantine the Great, is said to have besieged this city for three years, but was unable to win it except finally by marrying Helena. Indeed this is conjectured from those things which people digging have excavated from the earth: iron and stones, and minted coins and buildings found beneath the earth."][627]

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[625] This text is available in Latin and in translation in Astley, 'Medieval Colchester—Town, Castle and Abbey—from MSS. in the British Museum', 117-138. This manuscript is also known as the 'Nero' text, and Astley's translation is to be treated with caution. For this reason, I also draw upon the translation in Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend,* 67-68.

[626] Astley, 'Medieval Colchester—Town, Castle and Abbey—from MSS. in the British Museum', 122-128.

[627] Translation in Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend,* 67-68.

This part of the text forms a *laus civitatis* — a trope where a city or town in praised as a matter of rhetorical convention, similar to Lucian's text already seen at Chester. [628] The text demonstrates an interest in the city's fortifications, with the praise of the city's 'strong walls', and is also keen to emphasise the three generations — Coel, Helena, and Constantine — which originate from the town. This part of the account also stresses the fact that Colchester was the site where Roman invading forces joined bloodlines with the native British, through the union of Helena and Constantius, and the production of the greatest Roman emperor, Constantine. This part of the text also differs considerable from Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, which makes no reference to physical remains at the city. Helen is cited as 'mother of the empire', glorifying the role which Britain had to play in the development of Rome's history.

The justification for Helena's Colchester origins, by the discovery of Roman artefacts at the town, is the most interesting aspect of this passage. The text does not say when these remains were discovered, but this passage is written as if it should be familiar to those associated with the town. The account tells of iron objects and coins, which implies a medieval ability to recognize Roman coins and iron artefacts. Additionally, the 'stones' discovered in the town suggests building material, milestones, or precious objects, such as the jewels or cameos found at St Albans. If we are to use the translation of 'building stone', it confirms that the re-use of such material in medieval buildings was undertaken with full knowledge of the Roman origins of the stone.

The discovery of 'buildings found beneath the earth' only confirms the ability of medieval people to understand their Roman past through the presence of material artefacts. They recognised that Roman civilisation once stood in the vicinity of medieval Colchester, and that the evidence for this was now buried in the ground. "*Inventa*" (the last word in the Latin excerpt) refers to the discovery of Roman buildings, but this Latin term can also alternately mean "fabrication" or "invention". Hence, this entry is not simply concerned with the unearthing of Roman remains in the Norman period, but is rather intimately concerned with the creation of a fictional Roman past which appropriates existing material artefacts. In this particular myth of Helena, the past is not simply fabricated; it is dug up out of the ground. The twin processes of excavation and composition are conflated in this passage.

This section on St Helena fits roughly within the general narrative trajectory of the foundation story. However, it forms a discrete section, and Antonina Harbus posits that this account is a later addition to the text. The author of the foundation myth claims that the entire document is drawn from book three of the *Chronicle* of Marianus Scotus: "*Marianus Libro Tertio De Monsterio Colcestretsi et eius fundatore*" [Marianus in Book Three. Concerning the monastery of

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[628] Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend,* 70.

Colchester and its founder]. However this section is not found in this *Chronicle*, or in John of Worcester's adaptation of the *Chronicle*, meaning that this account cannot be dated.[629] The other contents of the manuscript, BL Cotton Nero D viii, relate specifically to British history and legend, but the other texts in this manuscript such as *The Epistle of Alexander "de situ Indie"*, Gerald of Wales' *Descriptio Kambriae*, *De Longtitudine Angliae*, and Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* have decidedly geographical concerns. The contents of this interesting miscellany might explain the later addition to the text of the foundation of St John, as it concerns geographical and material elements of Colchester's history. It is possible that this part of the text was added following the popularisation of the Helen myth at Colchester by twelfth-century Latin authors.

However, D. Stephenson argues that as this text varies so markedly from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*, that it must be of an earlier date, and points to a twelfth-century compilation of the annals. While Geoffrey deals with Helena and Coel, it is in an entirely different fashion to the account in the *Annales Colcestriensis*.[630] By the close of the twelfth-century, Geoffrey's work was widely known, so this account of Coel and Helena might also form part of an oral tradition at the town, or express twelfth-century traditions of realistic observation. Geoffrey of Monmouth, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon must have derived their original ideas about Helena's Colchester origins from somewhere, and the town may have already capitalised on this.

Despite the complexities of descriptions of material remains in relation to Helena, the existence of the Anglo-Saxon church dedicated to the saint (restored in the twelfth-century), would have already promoted Helena's origins in the local consciousness. However, the material re-use of her church was simply one of the many ways in which the Roman Helena was appropriated by twelfth-century townspeople. The Helena legend already existed as local oral or folklore tradition by the late eleventh century, which found its way into multiple literary accounts over the course of the century.[631] Evidence from the *Annales Colcestriensis* indicates that both Coel and Helena appear in early accounts of the town's history, with the lengthy account of Helen's life, as well as in the construction of the castle over Coel's palace, and Helena's establishment of the chapel of St Helen. Between the late eleventh century and the mid-fourteenth (which is the accepted compilation date for the *Annales Colcestriensis*), the Helena myth began to play a large role in the town's historical past. Colchester's appropriation of the Roman saint, and the

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[629] Harbus, *Helena of Britain in Medieval Legend,* 68.

[630] Stephenson's appendix in Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle': 412.

[631] Stephenson's appendix in Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle': 409-413.

justification for this using the presence of Roman material remains, shows a sophisticated and highly conscious engagement with the material past.

Strong local, material traditions influenced the development of the British Helena myth in many twelfth-century chronicles by William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Henry of Huntingdon. Geoffrey of Monmouth's lengthy account of King Coel was disseminated widely, and Henry of Huntingdon was the first chronicler in the twelfth-century tradition to record material remains at the town. However, the most detailed descriptions of Roman remains were developed locally, with an archaeological exploration of St Helen's chapel and the Norman keep. From this, it is possible to see that the local interest in Roman remains at Colchester had a widespread, national impact. Ideas about the Roman past were propagated through myths concerning Helena, Coel and Constantine in the Middle Ages, and became part of the creation of Norman identity. Norman royal and elite authority wholly appropriated the antiquity and imperial connotations of the "palace of Coel", the Roman imperial aesthetic of polychromic tile banding, and the early Christian associations with Helena. This collective myth-making engendered the creation of a new Anglo-Norman authority in Colchester, and further afield.

5.5 Major monastic houses

5.5.1 St John's Abbey

Following from the imperial statement seen in Colchester Castle, the major monastic houses of Colchester reflect the spiritual aspects of Roman re-use at Colchester. While nothing survives of the Anglo-Norman Benedictine monastery of St John's, from archaeological excavation we can infer a variety of re-use practices which may signify the meaningful appropriation of Roman material culture (Figures 155 and 156). The site of St John's lies over a significant Roman cemetery which would have lain on the southern approach to the town and which features burials from the third and fourth centuries.[632] This topographical re-use is similar to re-use at St Albans abbey, St John's and St Werberg's, and the other Augustinian religious house in Colchester, St Botolph's priory. In the late Anglo-Saxon period, there was a small church dedicated to St John the Baptist, of which the foundations were discovered during excavations from 1971-1985.[633] This church was a three-celled building, with a small apsidal chancel and its shape has led some to conclude that this building was a late-Roman martyrium. Upon closer inspection of the foundations, it is clear that this church was of two building phases and these date from the early

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[632] Phillip Crummy, 'Excavations and observations in the grounds of St John's Abbey, 1971-85' edited by Nina Crummy, Phillip Crummy and Carl Crossan, *Excavations of Roman and later cemeteries, churches, and monastic sites in Colchester, 1971-88*, (London: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1993), 206.

[633] Crummy, 'Excavations and observations in the grounds of St John's Abbey, 1971-85', 203-235.

Norman period.[634] However, this church was constructed out of re-used Roman brick and flint, and this is still evident in the foundations.[635] The Roman burials and Roman masonry in the vicinity had a lasting impact upon the use and interpretation of the site prior to the construction of the Norman church.

St John's abbey was founded by Eudo Dapifer in 1095, and the monastic church was completed and consecrated in 1115. In 1133 the abbey was burnt down, and documentary evidence from this time states that the cloister and other buildings were then relocated to the south of the church.[636] The only remaining evidence we have of the Norman church comes from the discovery of robbed trenches of the church foundations in the west end.[637] These do not indicate conclusively whether the church was built out of re-used Roman remains, but we do know that the city wall directly to the north of the monastery has been substantially robbed. Additionally, the precinct wall of St John's, presumed to be of sixteenth-century date, actually reveals a much earlier medieval wall built out of re-used tile, flint and Kentish ragstone.[638] As the soil removed during the 1133 renovations was piled up behind the wall, it is likely that this wall dates from the initial building phase of the Norman church.[639] Roman remains were clearly an important source of building material at the site of St John's, both before and after the Conquest.

St John's was the principal monastic house in Colchester during the Norman period. It reflected the trend for the foundation of Benedictine houses by early Norman lords, and was highly likely to have been built out of re-used Roman masonry. Texts produced at St John's were responsible for all references to Roman remains and their re-use that were produced at the town in this period, and this may have been inspired by Roman re-use at the monastery itself. St John's association with Eudo's other foundations of Colchester Castle and St Helen's chapel may have meant that its buildings also imitated Roman decorative techniques. Burials continued from the Roman period right through the Middle Ages and the site may have retained some of its importance from this association. St John's Benedictine monastery may have even inspired building traditions at the slightly later Augustinian foundation of St Botolph's.

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[634] Adam Wightman, *St Johns Abbey church: An evaluation at the Garrison Officers Club, St Johns Green, Colchester, Essex, Colchester Archaeological Report 601,* (London: Colchester Archaeological Trust 2011), 1-31.

[635] Crummy, 'Excavations and observations in the grounds of St John's Abbey, 1971-85' 213-215.

[636] Ashdown-Hill, *Medieval Colchester's Lost Landmarks*, 33.

[637] These include the north and south nave walls, as well as the north and south aisle walls. Wightman, *St Johns Abbey church: An evaluation at the Garrison Officers Club, St Johns Green, Colchester, Essex,* 4.

[638] Phillip Crummy, 'Excavations and observations in the grounds of St John's Abbey, 1971-85', 219.

[639] Phillip Crummy, 'Excavations and observations in the grounds of St John's Abbey, 219.

5.5.2 St Botolph's Priory

St Botolph's was founded between 1099 and 1104 as the first Augustinian priory in England.[640] It was most likely formed out of an earlier pre-Conquest foundation, suggested by the dedication to St Botolph, who was a seventh-century Saxon missionary saint.[641] There are few documentary sources relating to the priory, so what we know of the church comes from archaeological excavation and several mentions in documents produced at the nearby, more powerful monastery of St John's. In the late eleventh century, the community of secular canonry at St Botolph's priory, which was headed by a presbyter called Ainulf, sent two priests to the continent to learn the Augustinian rule. Following the priests' return to England, construction began on the church and monastic buildings.[642] This follows a similar pattern of Augustinian foundation to St John's at Chester, which also emerged out of a community of pre-Conquest secular priests. It is likely that the pre-Conquest priests of St Botolph's served a minster church which could have had very early origins.[643] Despite its status as the head of Augustinian foundations in England, St Botolph's never achieved particular financial strength and the number of its monks always remained small.[644] Indeed, even after the adoption of Augustinian rule, part of the priory church retained its parochial status.[645] Nonetheless, St Botolph's provides one of the best examples to analyse large-scale re-use of Roman material culture at Colchester.

St Botolph's church was constructed outside the city walls near the south gate of the town, off the Roman south road (see Figures 157 and 158). This area may have featured a Roman cemetery, and a late Roman building has been discovered at the site.[646] The tessellated floor of this Roman building suggests its use as a late-Roman cemetery building, rather than a dwelling.[647] St Botolph's may even stand on the site of a late-Roman *martyrium*, which could have been a tomb or "simply a specific spot associated with a saint or Christian martyr."[648] An earlier building which

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[640] The foundation date is contentious, but there is a charter of William Rufus which grants protection to the canons of St Botolph's, prior to William's death on the second of August 1100. A formal bull of Pope Pascal II in 1116, acknowledged the foundation of St Botolph's before all other Augustinian houses in England. Ashdown-Hill, *Medieval Colchester's Lost Landmarks*, 57.

[641] Carl Crossan, Nina Crummy, Andrew Harris. 'St Botolph's Priory', *The Colchester Archaeologist,* Issue 5 (1992): 7.

[642] Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory': 7.

[643] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester' 35.

[644] Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory': 9.

[645] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester' 35.

[646] This lies to the north of the priory church, before one reaches the city wall. W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 35.

[647] W. and K. Rodwell, 'The ancient churches of Colchester', 35.

[648] Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory': 7.

predates the priory church was discovered during excavations in 1991. This building is on a different alignment to other foundations discovered at the site, and is associated with a number of late-Roman finds.[649] If the site is indeed a *martyrium,* the implication for the choice of site at St Botolph's resembles the development of the monastic church at St Albans. However, as there is not yet concrete evidence for the earlier structure as a *martyrium* (i.e., there were no specifically early Christian artefacts found near it), we must simply accept the importance of the site of St Botolph's as a place of Roman burial which carried significance in later centuries.

The construction of the monastic buildings at St Botolph's took the better part of the twelfth century, and the church was dedicated in 1177, which agrees with the dating of the west front to the 1160s.[650] The church had a cruciform plan, with a nave, choir, side aisles, and crossing tower. Because the church was also used in a parochial capacity from its earliest foundation, a wall across the eastern end of the nave would have divided the church at the crossing. The nave of the church would have been of a similar size to the nearby abbey of St John's, but its eastern arm was considerably shorter. The total length of the church was 53.7 metres, and the breadth of the nave and aisles was 16.75 metres.[651] The monastic buildings, as well as the central crossing and east end of the church were destroyed during the Dissolution and the English Civil War, leaving only the west front (the 'Pardon door'), and lower levels of the nave intact (Figure 159). Nothing remains of the transepts and choir of the twelfth-century church.[652] Despite this, the church reveals a great deal about the re-use and emulation of Roman material culture in this particular monastic setting at Colchester.

It is likely that the priory church of St Botolph's lies over the earlier Anglo-Saxon church, which may date as early as the seventh century. During excavations in 1991, a building was found with an ashy mortar, and on a different alignment to both the twelfth-century church and the possible Roman foundation.[653] This may be part of the pre-Conquest Saxon church, which would indicate continuous occupation of the site between the Roman period and the later Norman church. Not only did the Roman cemetery and burials provide a suitable setting for the church, but the site had already been in use throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. During excavations in 1991, a crypt was discovered underneath the nave of the Romanesque church.[654] Twelfth-century St Botolph's may have been important enough to possess a relic or relics for display to pilgrims,

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[649] Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory': 10.

[650] Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory': 7.

[651] Ashdown-Hill, *Medieval Colchester's Lost Landmarks*, 60-61.

[652] Ashdown-Hill, *Medieval Colchester's Lost Landmarks*, 53.

[653] Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory',10.

[654] Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory',10.

attracting visitors to the town who witnessed and participated in the conscious display of re-used Roman remains. The site of St Botolph's over a Roman cemetery and an Anglo-Saxon church shows the continuous relationship between the site and all of the buildings which occupied it, which can be further understood by an examination of the fabric of the church.

St Botolph's priory was constructed almost entirely of Roman material. The construction technique used in the church was the same as that of the castle — re-used flint and septaria, with occasional tile banding (Figure 160). This material must have been salvaged from Roman remains standing above ground around the town, as Roman foundations contain little tile or stone.[655] The Roman walls directly abutting the monastery appear to have been completely robbed (Figure 161), and they may have been a likely site for stone collection. Re-use at St Boltolph's indicates that there were large amounts of available Roman masonry at Colchester well into the twelfth-century, given the late date of construction for the priory church.[656] In the west front, there is also high quality decorative carving made out of Caen and Barnack Stone, interspersed with salvaged Roman brick (Figures 162, 163 and 164). The re-use of Roman bricks may have provided sharper edges for quoins and corners than plastering directly over rubble, but the use of brick may also have been intended in a decorative manner, and may not have been covered with a mortar like other parts of the building.[657] If the bricks were left uncovered, then they would have created a contrasting and visually interesting decorative scheme. The integration of Roman brickwork with high-status stone imported from Caen in the decoration of the west entrance to the church conveyed an imposing sense of power and *auctoritas* derived from two differing sources.

Exposed brickwork may also have formed part of the decorative scheme in other parts of the church, as Roman brick and flint is also used around doors and windows. Like most Norman churches, St Botolph's was rendered with a lime mortar and painted, to give the impression of being constructed of better quality materials that the Roman rubble available for re-use at the town.[658] However, nave pillars towards the central crossing of the church (surviving at the easternmost part of the ruins today), were constructed with carefully demarcated tile and rubble layers, reminiscent of Roman buildings. The Roman walls adjacent to the priory may have provided a model for this decorative pattern of polychrome banding, and even if these piers in St Botolph's were rendered with plaster, the adoption of this decorative technique may have been a

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[655] Crummy, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester*, 47-48.

[656] Sir Charles Peers, *St Botolph's Priory, Colchester, Essex,* (London: Ministry of Public Building and Works, 1964).

[657] Like most Norman churches, St Botolph's was covered in a layer of plaster. Traces of this have been found lodged in some of the deeper recessed of the west front. Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory', 7.

[658] Crossan, Crummy and Harris 'St Botolph's Priory', 7.

deliberate and meaningful part of their initial construction. If these pillars were not rendered, the banding provides a pleasing aesthetic effect when viewed down the nave (Figures 165 and 166). Without further examination of the internal structure of the nave piers, it is not possible to ascertain whether this banding formed a structural purpose, such as keeping the stonework in the piers level during construction. If, like at St Albans, the *tegulae* in these piers are not coursed throughout, then the banding in these piers may have been implemented for decorative purposes, placing the re-used material on conspicuous display, and not intended to be rendered over (Figures 167 and 168).

The site of St Botolph's had a complex building history, culminating in the construction of the twelfth-century priory, which possibly drew on far earlier Anglo-Saxon and Roman re-use traditions. There are several aspects of re-use evident at St Botolph's, with the occupation of the significant Roman site, the wide scale re-use of building material, and the emulation of Roman decorative techniques forming a major part of the twelfth-century building project. St Botolph's resembles the castle, where Caen stone was used to highlight Norman Romanesque decorative features. This blends high-status twelfth-century building stone with Roman remains, suggesting a complex display of meaning conveyed through high-status building styles and materials. St Botolph's shared a close relationship with Roman aspects of the town's material culture, and drew not only practical, but meaningful inspiration from existing Roman surrounds. Like Colchester Castle, there may have been elements of Roman aesthetic in the use of polychromic banding, but in a monastic setting, this may have less association with notions of empire and a greater affiliation with the Roman church. This is supported by the continued occupation of Roman burial sites, similar to the occupation of St Albans with its long tradition of Christian practice.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a reappraisal of Colchester's importance as a flagship town of the Norman Conquest. The castle and its associated texts demonstrate the notoriety of myths associated with the town, and the importance of Roman remains to the validation of fictional historical processes. While Colchester's monasteries never particularly flourished, most likely as a result of omnipresent secular power in the years following the Conquest, their re-use of Roman remains was as prevalent as the re-use witnessed in the imperial castle. Eudo Dapifer was responsible for many of the major secular and religious buildings in Colchester, and his relationship with successive kings of England shows that his presence in the town was consistently geared towards the promotion of royal power. Roman remains played an integral part in this, and this case-study has demonstrated that Colchester should be considered by

Norman and architectural scholarship as one of the major architectural drivers of the Norman Conquest.

The topography of medieval Colchester translated many aspects of the Roman town layout, and many Norman buildings occupied Roman sites. These sites would have retained their significance throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, with many pre-Conquest foundations formed over Roman burial areas, buildings, and the temple of Claudius. Parish churches, the extramural monasteries and the royal enclave all conform to this pattern, which shows that Roman remains were equally important to the Anglo-Saxons, but in less overt and explicit ways to the Norman conquerors. The demolition of existing Saxon buildings over the temple podium to make way for the Norman Castle shows this through a clear redesigning of the site in the post-Conquest period. This central space, with existing Saxon royal connotations, became the site one of the most important Norman buildings of the late-eleventh century – Colchester Castle.

The location of the castle over the supposedly "lavish palace of Coel" echoed into the twelfth-century and beyond in textual descriptions produced at the town, and cemented the Roman origins of the site in the local cultural consciousness. Re-use at the castle was tied to the myth of Helena, Coel's mother, who, according to twelfth-century sources, reportedly founded a church nearby over the remains of the Roman theatre. Despite the inaccuracy of this claim, Helena became further associated with the town, and myths concerning her life became enmeshed with local historical accounts of the Roman past. The relationship between Colchester Castle and St Helen became one of the most important features of Roman textual re-use at Colchester. The localised myths concerning this Roman family were later disseminated to a wider twelfth-century literary audience by major chroniclers such as William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Henry of Huntingdon. Localised material culture at the Colchester became part of the legitimation of the Norman political legacy.

Unlike St Albans, where the Roman city wall was removed, or Chester, where the Roman city wall was partially retained yet expanded, the case study at Colchester provides an example where the medieval city wall followed the line of the Roman wall exactly. This demonstrates the clearest retention of topographical continuity out of all of the case studies, as the urban space was primarily contained within the walls. The city walls are mentioned in Anglo-Saxon accounts, and were repaired in the pre-Conquest period, and Colchester's civic identity was always established within the confines of the Roman city. The two institutions which lay outside the walls — St John's monastery and St Botolph's priory — re-used Roman burial areas in a way that emphasised their spiritual nature. Monastic re-use was therefore clearly defined differently to secular or civic re-use, with an alternative focus on the perceived remnants of late-Roman Christianity which made reference to the Roman church. The re-use of Roman topography may demonstrate the inherent

importance of the location of particular areas of the town, but in cases where no practical sense can be found for their continued occupation, this may represent a Norman desire to retain continuity with the Roman and Anglo-Saxon past, while erecting even more impressive buildings over Roman sites.

The re-use of building material is seen in most of the surviving buildings from the long twelfth century, with parish churches, monasteries and the castle all re-using Roman remains. In some cases, particular Roman remains were appropriated for a specific structural function, such as the tegulae and *petit appareil* blocks in Colchester Castle. Several of Colchester's excellently preserved parish churches still feature parts of the original eleventh- and twelfth-century fabric. From these, it becomes clear that the re-use of Roman material culture was a prevalent practice even among lower-status buildings in the town in the High Middle Ages, and the re-use of Roman sites and topography is evident in the positioning of the buildings. The Roman wall also provided a great deal of building stone, and was mostly repaired and renovated around entrance points in the medieval period, establishing an almost continuous use of Roman fortifications. In some cases, re-use at Colchester may have been for practical purposes of cost and convenience as a supply of building stone, but in many cases, this re-use of building material was intended for decorative display, which evoked similarities with Roman buildings.

The final typology of re-use at Colchester can be seen in the emulation of specific building techniques designed for aesthetic display. Colchester Castle is an excellent example of a Norman building which copied Roman decoration from nearby buildings. This emulation may have been related to the choice to re-use Roman remains (hence confined to the same types of building techniques), but it may also have been an attempt to convey some of the authority, longevity and prestige of Roman remains. Like St Albans Abbey, the architect and builders of Colchester Castle chose this building material and these techniques, instead of the ashlar construction method and facing of many contemporary Norman buildings. St Helen's chapel also probably featured this banding, and the monastic house of St Botolph's also imitated polychromic decorative techniques which can be still be seen at St Botolph's today. This type of re-use implies a deliberate attempt to reference the nuanced meanings in the Roman material past, and was part of a wider architectural culture among the Norman elite witnessed at all case study sites. The emulation of Roman decoration can also be seen in a parochial setting, with polychromic banding and herringbone in the churches of Holy Trinity, St-Mary-at-the-Wall and possibly All Saints'. Colchester's parish churches were rebuilt slightly later than major buildings at Colchester, indicating that this decoration may have been copied from the castle and monasteries.

There was a significant chronological delay between the polychromic banding in different buildings at Colchester, which suggests distinct phases and differing motives for re-use. The castle

abandoned Roman decorative techniques after the first phase of building in the late-eleventh century, but St Botolph's still implemented these in the last quarter of the twelfth century. It may be that St Botolph's was appropriating this decorative technique, not only from the Roman walls, but also from the model of the castle. By the time of the construction of St Botolph's, the translated Roman meanings of the castle would have made a significant impact upon the consciousness of the town, and St Botolph's may have attempted to copy this architectural prestige. Alternatively, the monks of St Botolph's may simply have used the castle as a model for the most effective means of using Roman building material. However, the non-structural tile banding in the nave pillars of St Botolph's implies that this was a meaningful act of display.

Historical records which describe the castle, St Helen's and a fictional Roman history which were produced at the monastery of St John's in the twelfth century demonstrate the material and textual relationships between Colchester's medieval institutions and Roman remains. There was a prevalent culture of *romanitas* at Colchester, expressed in both buildings and texts, which discussed, copied and even attempted to supersede the Roman past. This was driven by the two men appointed to oversee royal interests in the town, whose buildings were the emulated by Colchester's lower status institutions in an aspirational attempt to copy Norman power. Colchester is unique among the case studies in that so much about the agents of re-use at the town is known. It is also the most unmistakably 'royal' site out of all of the case studies, giving the clearest indications of the priorities of imposed Anglo-Norman identity formation.

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The case studies examined in this thesis reveal historical, architectural, literary and archaeological information about the re-use of Roman material culture in the long twelfth century. Ultimately, it is the exploration of this evidence at each site which informs an understanding of medieval perceptions of Rome and Romano-British remains and allows us to draw conclusions about the nature and extent of re-use in the Norman period. This discussion chapter will examine the historical developments of the Norman Conquest and the twelfth century which can be examined in light of continuity and change with the Anglo-Saxon period as well as wider secular and monastic cultural developments. As outlined in the theoretical and methodological chapter, patronage and audience also have important roles to play in historical processes of re-use in both literature and buildings. As is evident in the case studies, the processes of colonisation and re-use following the Norman Conquest greatly informed the development of Romanesque architecture as a stylistic movement in England. Architectural characteristics such as the re-use of building material, decoration and building techniques, and topographical aspects of urban development can be seen in both textual descriptions and the material reality. Art historical approaches inform an understanding of the re-use of decorative elements of Roman material culture, but these can also be challenged by the prevalence of re-use in a local context. Nationalist texts which discuss re-use and Rome's place in England, as well as descriptions of excavations and instances of hidden re-use, both suffer from an existing lacuna in scholarship, but can be informed by evidence presented in the case studies. An examination of the re-use of Roman building material allows for a better comprehension of cultural processes of the long twelfth century, and challenges and informs certain ideas concerning the nature of Romano-British material history, Rome and *romanitas* in the middle ages.

6.2 Anglo-Saxon beginnings

In order to understand how Norman re-use was a different and dynamic part of the Conquest process, this chapter must first examine late-Saxon re-use practices, revealing that Norman re-use was part of a longer cultural tradition despite its flourishing in the late-eleventh and twelfth-centuries. Anglo-Saxon re-use has been extensively considered by other scholarship, and for this reason lies outside the main remit of this thesis.[659] However, it is necessary to take

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[659] For examples, see John F. Potter, 'Masonry detail and stonework in English early ecclesiastical architecture', *Patterns in Stonework: The Early Church in Britain and Ireland. An Introduction to Ecclesiastical Geology*, (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009); Jane Hawkes '"Iuxta Morem Romanorum": Stone and Sculpture in the Style of Rome', in G.H. Brown and C. Karkov (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, (Albany: SUNY, 2003), 69-100;

Anglo-Saxon settlement and re-use into consideration, as each case-study site was significantly shaped by historical events of the late-Saxon period, and post-Conquest cultural trends should not be considered in isolation from what has gone before. Most importantly, we should understand that there are differences in the ways in which Anglo-Saxons and Normans engaged with the Roman past, and these processes of continuity and transition constitute the starting point from which to examine re-use in the Anglo-Norman period. Many early Anglo-Saxon churches were built using re-used Roman remains, and formed part of the early Christian tradition in England of building in stone.[660] According to Bede, building churches '*juxta morem Romanorum*' (in the style/custom of the Romans), meant the explicit use of stone, which in most cases, involved the re-use of available Roman stone.[661] Jane Hawkes tells us that the "situation, dedications and appearance" of these early Christian stone churches physically established the presence of Roman imperialism and the Roman church in England, sharing many methodological parallels with evidence at the later Norman case studies of St Albans, Chester and Colchester.[662] Thus the situation whereby the use and re-use of stone expressed a physical manifestation of Roman ideals was already established in the early Saxon period.

By the time of consistent resettlement and concentrated occupation at the case-study sites in the late-Saxon period, there was a recognisable link between building in stone or re-using Roman stonework and the Roman church. Many parish churches and at least one monastic house at each town were founded prior to the Conquest, and the use of stone in these buildings may relate to a conscious desire to replicate this relationship. The Anglo-Saxon period also saw the re-introduction of Roman decorative techniques, such as herringbone and polychromy, which can be seen across England as well as in several parish churches in the case-study sites.[663] The tower of Holy Trinity in Colchester is one such striking example, but many of the parish churches in the two southern case studies, including St Michael's and St Lawrence's at St Albans, may already have used herringbone and polychromy in the pre-Conquest forms of the church. By the late-Saxon period, it wasn't simply building in stone which was emblematic of Roman *mores*; the deliberate emulation of decorative techniques also indicated a connection with Roman remains. Lori Ann Garner has suggested that the herringbone pattern had Anglo-Saxon precedents in stone carving, and that it influenced the later preference for the zigzag 'chevron' pattern in Romanesque

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Harold and Joan Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture, second edition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Eaton, *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*; Stocker, 'Rubbish Re-cycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire', 83-102.

[660] Potter, 'Masonry detail and stonework in English early ecclesiastical architecture', 36-38.

[661] Hawkes'"Iuxta Morem Romanorum": Stone and Sculpture in the Style of Rome', 69-100;

[662] Hawkes'"Iuxta Morem Romanorum": Stone and Sculpture in the Style of Rome', 73.

[663] Eric Fernie, 'Minsters and Parish Churches', *The architecture of Norman England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 210.

architecture.[664] The copying of decoration and building techniques from Roman models in medieval buildings clearly demonstrates a long-standing continuity between Anglo-Saxon and Norman cultural practices which will be explored in greater detail below.

The Anglo-Saxon church of St John's in Chester, which was located inside the east gate of the amphitheatre, may have highlighted the link between this church and existing Roman remains, resulting in the choice to remain on site when the church was rebuilt in the Norman period. The multiple layers of occupation at this site — from Roman amphitheatre, to early Saxon secular stronghold, and later to a church — demonstrates the uses to which Roman remains could be put, and shows that settled Roman sites retained their attraction into the Norman period. Colchester Castle also occupied the late-Saxon royal residence in the vicinity of the Roman Temple of Claudius, again showing the changing functions, both sacred and secular, of monumental buildings throughout the late-Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. St Albans Abbey was built over the site of an earlier church or tomb that may have existed on site since the early-Saxon period, indicating that consecrated religious sites retained special significance, and could become the focus of later monastic sites. Likewise, many of the geographical locations of parish churches over Roman remains in all of the case studies were established in the pre-Conquest period. Anglo-Saxon settlement, through the retention of meaningful sites, therefore had a serious impact on the development of all of the case studies. All of the case-study towns share similar post-Roman histories, with extensive Anglo-Saxon urban occupation (much of which overlaid Roman roads) increasing in the ninth and tenth centuries. The walls at Chester and Colchester were both re-fortified in the late-Saxon period, and this also had a significant impact on the development of the topography of the towns.

The literary traditions of St Helena, which first emerged in the late-Saxon period, influenced later literature concerning Colchester in the twelfth-century. Re-use from the Anglo-Saxon period is mentioned also in Matthew Paris' case-study text of the *Gesta Abbatum*, when the late-Saxon abbots of St Albans excavated the ruins of Roman Verulamium for building material for the abbey (see below). However, these references are only two instances which mention Roman Britain or its material past in the Anglo-Saxon period, and the archaeological evidence at the case-study sites suggests a greater Anglo-Saxon engagement than the majority of historical or literary accounts reveal. The single extant poem, 'The Ruin', which examines Roman remains in the Anglo-Saxon period, or Bede's descriptions of sites around England, pale in comparison with the outpouring of texts which reference Roman remains produced by the Normans. Descriptions of

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[664] Lori Ann Garner 'The French chevron and Anglo-Saxon architectural aesthetics', in *Structuring Spaces: Oral Poetics and Architecture in Early Medieval England*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 192-194.

Roman ruins and re-use were primarily absent in the Anglo-Saxon literary corpus, and the Norman period provided a considerably more fruitful set of evidence with which to examine re-use from an archaeological and literary perspective.

Therefore, this thesis has focussed on the cultural processes at work which so profoundly emphasised the re-use of Roman remains in the Norman context. It is important to note that the formation of monasteries in the pre-Conquest period meant that each of the houses in the case studies had a continuous and lengthy relationship with which to create these later literary traditions. The case studies suggest that continuity with many aspects of the Anglo-Saxon past was also expressed on a material level, which transitioned across the period of the Norman Conquest into the twelfth-century. Most of the Norman re-use practices seen at the case-study sites had Anglo-Saxon precedents, and demonstrate that consciousness and an understanding of the re-use of Roman building materials had occurred long before the Norman Conquest. Ultimately, it is where these earlier traditions differ from Norman developments in architecture and literature which allow us to fully comprehend the Anglo-Norman perception of the Roman past and its material remains.

6.3 Anglo-Norman building and development

The Normans asserted their identity prior to the Conquest in a variety of ways, one of which derived authority via descent from the Trojans, and this construct of *Normanitas* was also reinforced by a Scandinavian heritage. However, Hugh M. Thomas posits that this fabricated identity became weakened away from Normandy, and that the Normans soon appropriated aspects of local identity from their various conquered territories.[665] Ideas of what it was to be "Norman" may actually have been constituted from people who were Breton, Flemish or Italian, and upon arrival in England, the Normans sought to establish their control over the country, adopting and even creating alternative sources of authority from the legacy of Rome in the remains they saw around them. This was in part, an act of integration, as the native British had derived religious and royal authority from Roman remains since the early Saxon period. Reference to Rome pervaded the Norman experience in England, and at the case-study sites, this was expressed both architecturally and textually in a variety of ways. In these instances, power and authority derived from *spolia* related specifically to the aims of the Norman Conquest, and Roman re-use can be historically contextualised following the arrival of the Normans in England.

An intensive and extensive program of building across all of the case-study sites examined in this thesis occurred during the Anglo-Norman period, correlating with Norman expansion

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[665] Hugh M. Thomas, '*Normanitas*', *The English and The Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity, 1066-1220, (*Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2003), 32-45.

across England at the time.[666] As Norman power extended over St Albans, Colchester, and Chester, parish churches were constructed on an unprecedented scale. Where existing churches stood, they were rebuilt and often rededicated to different patron saints. In each town, the layout of streets and other topography was altered to make way for Norman buildings, an expanding population, and widespread economic growth. All of the monastic churches and associated buildings of the case-study sites were constructed following the Conquest, regardless of whether they were existing Anglo-Saxon monastic institutions. In addition to ecclesiastical building programs, castles were constructed at both Chester and Colchester to assert military and political control over the native subjects, as well as to provide a symbolic rallying point for the imperial aspirations of the conquerors.[667] Chester and Colchester's city walls were reinforced and extended beyond their late-Saxon capacity, while the Roman town walls of Verulamium at St Albans were mostly removed to provide building material for the abbey.

The Norman Romanesque featured an amalgamation of several styles of architecture adopted from conquered Norman territories, and was by no means homogenous. However it was instantly recognisable for its size. The introduction of such scale in England following the Conquest can be clearly seen in William of Malmesbury's account of "programs of great buildings,"[668] or the lamentations of Wulfstan of Worcester, the Saxon bishop who lived long into the post-Conquest period, who supposedly said, "We unfortunates are destroying the works of saints… in that happy age men were incapable of building for display… but we strive to pile up stones while neglecting souls."[669] Thus, the vast capital investment of the post-Conquest building program of the Normans occurred wherever their rule took root, "and became the outward manifestation of that rule".[670]

Norman historical accounts generally reveal little personal information about their subjects, but the case studies have disclosed a small amount of information about the people involved in the re-use process in the large case-study buildings, as well as the kinship and patronage networks which existed between them. Paul of Caen was Lanfranc's nephew, and he also had a relationship with Robert Mason through their joint oversight of the construction of St Albans Abbey. Gundulf of Rochester was Lanfranc's main administrator at Canterbury, and also

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[666] Marjorie Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England 1066-1166*, NewYork: Blackwell, 1987); Susan Reynolds, *An introduction to the history of English medieval towns*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 3.

[667] See Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England*.

[668] *Gesta Regum Anglorum, 461.*

[669] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum, 430-431.*

[670] James Clarke Holt, *Colonial England, 1066-1215*, (Ohio: Hambledon Press, 1997), 6. For a specific examination of the scale of certain new churches and monasteries, see 6-7.

accompanied him from St Etienne at Caen, where Paul of Caen also spent his novitiate.[671] Gundulf was also well acquainted with Eudo Dapifer, because they were both involved in the construction of Colchester Castle. Gundulf and Eudo may have exchanged masons on their various projects, in the same way they exchanged monks following the foundation of St John's abbey at Colchester. The first Earl of Chester, Hugh d'Avranches, was an important councillor to William I, and his father accompanied the Conqueror on his invasion of England with sixty ships.[672] Hugh also remained loyal to William Rufus in the rebellion of 1088, and was a councillor of Henry I.[673]

All of these people were royally appointed, as evidenced in extant charters, or had interaction with several English kings during construction of the case-study buildings and afterwards. They share similarities with other prominent men of the Conquest, such as Ernulf of Caen, who was involved with aspects of church building at Canterbury, Peterborough and Rochester; or Roger of Sarum, who oversaw the renovation or construction of castles at Sherbourne, Devizies, Old Sarum and Malmesbury.[674] It is clear that those involved with major building projects at each of the case studies were acquainted with the king, and often with each other. They were among the upper levels of the Anglo-Norman elite, and fitted within the wider post-Conquest Norman political hierarchy. Networks of architectural and literary patronage allow us to see how historical figures influenced, and were influenced in turn, by the re-use of Roman material remains.

The re-use of Roman remains was prevalent across all case-study sites, but it is interesting to see that at St Albans and Colchester there are stronger and more numerous links between patrons, and these sites show a slightly greater engagement with Roman decorative styles and monumentalism in their architectural designs. The case studies of St Albans and Colchester provide us with a model by which patronage networks at other Anglo-Norman towns may be examined. The case studies demonstrate the important relationships between stewards, patrons, masons, architects, and the king. All of them originated from the highest level of Norman power, all came from Normandy, and all were involved as part of the initial process of colonisation that took place in England. This shows that the re-use of Roman remains in large scale building projects was not simply a faceless cultural phenomenon; it could be ascribed to the ideas and motivations of real people who are evident in the historical record, and whose actions helped shape the Norman Conquest. While *romanitas* and the re-use of Roman stonework may have

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[671] Brooke, 'St Albans, the great abbey', 44.

[672] D. C. Douglas, 'Companions of the Conqueror', *History,* Volume 28, Issue 108, (1943): 129–147.

[673] C. P. Lewis, 'Hugh d'Avranches, first earl of Chester (d. 1101), magnate and founder of Chester Abbey', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14056, accessed 15th April 2013]

[674] Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, 40-41.

occurred all over continental Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, re-use at the case studies suggests that the practice was an integral part of Anglo-Norman identity during the long twelfth century.[675]

Interestingly, many of the buildings highlighted here may also in fact have utilised the skills of Anglo-Saxon masons and builders, which demonstrates a connection between Norman patrons and local builders where a scarcity of labour required it. The master mason at St Albans, Robert Mason, was most likely a native Englishman and Bishop Gundulf possibly had relationships with local builders and masons across sites, including Rochester, London and Colchester.[676] On the other hand, there are accounts of late-Saxon bishops attracting builders from Rome prior to the Conquest, when Wilfrid "learned from stonemasons who had been lured from Rome by hope of generous reward."[677] Norman builders were clearly renowned for their skill in building in stone, but it is most likely that a combination of Anglo-Saxon and Norman builders were involved in the construction of church and castle fabric in the case studies.[678]

It has been suggested that after the Conquest extensive use was made of an unskilled labour force, which could partially explain the selection of Roman building material.[679] The quarrying and cutting of regularly shaped blocks required a greater degree of skill than could be provided by an amateur workforce. However, in opposition to this argument, one might claim that building with irregular material, such as that re-used from Roman buildings, may have been more difficult because blocks needed to be selected for size, and each masonry course needed to be levelled correctly. This may clarify the choice of Roman tile banding which penetrated through the wall thickness seen in the two southern English case studies, which was likely copied intentionally to ensure ease of construction. Perhaps the shortage of skilled masons in the third quarter of the eleventh century may also explain the decision to construct several of the major secular and religious buildings in the case-study sites (such as Colchester Castle, St Botolph's, Colchester, and

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[675] For an overview of the development of English and Norman identities during this period, see Thomas, *The English and The Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity, 1066-1220.* Thomas argues that the Norman identity, or *Normanitas,* became less relevant in England over the course of the twelfth-century. Deference to the Roman past, and the construction of a unified identity which draws from Roman traditions may have contributed to this decline, and resulted in a greater collective identity following the Conquest.

[676] See Impey, *The White Tower*, 45.

[677] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum, 388.*

[678] For further explanation of the situation of local and imported masons following the Conquest, see Holt, *Colonial England, 1066-1215*, 8-11.

[679] Jennifer S. Alexander, 'The introduction and use of masons' marks in Romanesque buildings in England', *Medieval Archaeology*, Volume 51, (2007): 72.

St Albans Abbey) from re-used Roman material. [680] However, as French quarries were fully operational and supplying material for Anglo-Saxon patrons during this time, it is likely that the re-use of Roman building material at the case-study sites was at least partially ideological. [681] This complexity of motivations cannot be explained simply by reference to a skilled labour shortage and demonstrates that both native and imported workers may have been used at each site.

The processes of re-use appear to be collaborative across all case-study sites, with builders and patrons working closely together, at Colchester and St Albans in particular. All of the sites display networks of dissemination, with the re-use of Roman material culture found in all building types across all socio-economic and political strata. This thesis has demonstrated that collaboration could be particularly close, as with Robert Mason and Paul of Caen at St Albans, but that it also may include unknown builders, or less formal collaborative relationships such as in the construction of St Werberg's abbey, about whose patron/ builder relationship far less is known. In Colchester and Chester, where builders had long re-used Roman material, it is still noticeable when the patron plays a significant role, as Eudo Dapifer's castle project was unmistakeably ambitious and creative, and required massive amounts of salvaging to be effected.

When we consider the influence of patrons compared with master masons, it seems likely that architectural comparisons can again come into play. While master masons may have been responsible for germinating ideas and drawing disparate architectural features together into a cohesive stylistic whole, it is likely that patrons would have had the social position and perspectives of elite life, exposing them to wider cultural influences and motivations precipitating the re-use of Roman material culture. Those who had royal or contact in the first fifty years after the Conquest would have been familiar with ideas surrounding re-use, such as imperial power, longevity and ecclesiastical supremacy, and may have even received sanctioned instructions to put those ideas into practice. Once this had taken place, the case studies demonstrate that sometimes patrons and builders developed formalised relationships in which to produce monuments in the interests of royal power.

The Norman elite would have requested the construction of massive buildings which demonstrated, and in themselves became, a form of power. This 'power' can be contextualised by the historical developments of the Conquest, and demonstrates that monumental Norman building styles had a significant impact upon the physical and psychological landscape of

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[680] Richard Gem, 'A recession in English architecture during the early eleventh century and its effect on the development of Romanesque style', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, Volume 38, (1975): 28-49.

[681] Alexander, 'The introduction and use of masons' marks in Romanesque buildings in England', 74.

England.[682] Through the construction of large monuments, the king and his agents had access to power, and the solidity and permanence of monumental structures convinces the spectator of the reality of the power which brought them into existence.[683] Monumentality tends to be more prevalent in the formative stages of new civilisations, or at times of the consolidation of centralised power.[684] These concepts are relevant to all of the case-study sites, as Norman control and royal power became expressed through monumentality in their abbeys, churches and defensive fortifications. The starkness, repetitiveness and huge proportions of these buildings demonstrate the aims of the conquerors that were 'in a hurry to make their mark.'[685] Indeed, Colchester castle – located close to important royal power at London and Westminster – was built second only to the White Tower, and on an even larger scale. St Albans Abbey was also one third larger than Canterbury Cathedral, demonstrating unprecedented scale even when compared to other post-Conquest buildings.

This monumentality operated differently in different contexts, however, with the importation of Norman or Roman stone used to cement the primacy of Anglo-Saxon rule. At the case-study sites, it has become abundantly clear that instead of the uniform, attractive Norman stone, or remains with the association of considerable longevity from Rome, monumental architecture was constructed from locally sourced Roman stone. As we have seen, localised re-use may also have been a form of *Normanitas*, referencing re-use practices on the continent as strongly as pre-Conquest Saxon re-use. Eric Fernie's study of ecclesiastical style asserts much the same thing, where Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical architecture differs markedly from its Norman predecessor/counterpart and shows clear references to Saxon forms of insular architecture.[686] The recent developments in the dating of post-Conquest parish churches mirrors this blurred provenance, as Saxon and Norman styles of architecture show considerable stylistic overlap, and are increasingly difficult to date accurately.

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[682] Greenhalgh challenges the validity and efficacy of terms such as 'power', however this thesis strives to contextualise and historicise all instances of re-use, and provides integral literary evidence for helping to understand the import of this cultural phenomenon in a specific set of cases. See Michael Greenhalgh, *Marble Past, Monumental Present: Building with Antiquities in the Mediaeval Mediterranean*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008); and '*Spolia*: A definition in Ruins' in *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, edited by Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 75-95.

[683] P.J. Wilson, *The Domestication of the Human Species*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 134-135.

[684] Bruce Trigger, "Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behaviour", *World Archaeology*, Volume 22, Number 2: Monuments and the Monumental, (1990): 127.

[685] Michael T. Clanchy, 'Church Reform', *England and its Rulers 1066-1307 third edition*,(Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 67.

[686] Eric Fernie, 'The effect of the Conquest on Norman architectural patronage', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, Volume IX, (1986): 71.

Thus the case-studies may demonstrate a clear preference for codified, insular styles Saxon re-use, but they may also indicate an even greater form of power-broking, as the two ideas of *Romanitas* and *Normanitas* combined created strong links to both existing Norman identities and 'new' British practice. This re-use may have created an even more significant link with the Norman past than places where Caen stone was imported at great cost and energy. In other Anglo-Norman towns, such as Winchester, Canterbury, London or Gloucester, whitish stone building material (which emulated Caen stone but was sourced in Britain) was often preferable to the re-use of Roman remains. This suggests that patrons and builders in the case-study sites had a particular interest in not simply an association with Normandy, but also pre-Conquest localised re-use practices, above and beyond other urban centres in Anglo-Norman England.

St Albans and Colchester were located in areas with extensive royal control and influence, which may have affected the choice to build on such a grand scale over existing and inhabited Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains. Both sites were commissioned under direct royal authority, and even during the Anglo-Saxon period, had significant involvement from royal magnates.[687] Chester's relative isolation from London on the northern marches, and the presence of local earls prior to the Conquest, meant that the royal authority was still interested in maintaining control, but were perhaps more willing to grant privileges to the earls in order to maintain their loyalty. Hugh of Chester was William's leading counsellor as well as his chosen man in charge of dangerous territories. The appointment of the Anglo-Norman earls in Chester meant that the monasteries and castle were all patronised relatively locally, and while larger than existing buildings in the town, were still on a smaller scale than the Essex case-studies.

The extent of the re-use of Roman sandstone at Chester is less easy to ascertain, as the coursed masonry can only be identified as Roman where there are other markers, such as the repositioned Lewis holes in the church of St John's and mismatched tooling in the north transept of St Werberg's Abbey. Regional patronage at Chester may explain the relatively smaller size of its buildings, and less obvious re-use of Roman remains. The situation in Chester may be likened to the eastern seaboard of England following the Conquest, of which McClain argues: "where royal control was less secure and there was a history of political independence, negotiating the transition required a calculated balance of imposed authority and regard for the institutions of the past."[688] The advent of continental rulership in England provided the impetus for colossal style in this period, and the monumentality of Anglo-Norman architecture was most likely driven by the

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[687] Colchester castle may have been the site of a late-Saxon palace complex, and St Albans was a royal burgh established by Offa of Mercia.

[688] Aleksandra McClain, "Local churches and the conquest of the North: elite patronage and identity in Saxo-Norman Northumbria", *Early Medieval Northumbria: Kingdoms and Communities 450-1100*, edited by D. Petts and S. Turner, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 151.

secular and religious elite. In cases where this was strongest — closest to the royal seat of power at London — the architecture embodied an even grander scale and greater re-use of Roman remains.

It is important to remember that Norman monumentality was not simply an assertion of power; it also made direct reference to the buildings of ancient Rome, which had served the same purposes during the classical period. Across the Roman Empire, uniform architectural style, building function, and urban planning all occurred on a grandiose scale, allowing Rome's subjects to participate in the supremacy of imperial citizenship and culture. While later medieval people may not have had the same understanding of empire and monumentalism that we have today, it is likely that Rome's buildings were instantly recognisable in the middle ages for their size and imperial connotations.[689] Scale unparalleled since Roman times pervaded continental Romanesque styles across Italy, France and Germany in the late-eleventh century. J.C. Higgit notes that the study of antique architectural influences is more prevalent in countries where these influences are more obvious,[690] but these buildings can also be seen in the Romano-British remains of England. Eric Fernie tells us that the buildings of Anglo-Norman England were "larger and more inventive, eclectic and exotic, looking to the Empire and Rome....triumphalist, rivalling the handful of buildings of greatest prestige on the Continent."[691] By building in the same way at cathedrals and other ecclesiastical and secular buildings in the surrounding town, the Norman elite in England asserted their own imperial ambitions.

Castle and cathedral building were undoubtedly a tool of Norman imperial policy.[692] In the case of the extensive cathedral building directly after the Norman Conquest, the Roman church was as much a relic of the Roman world as the Roman Empire, and informs any discussion of 'empire building' in secular architecture. The 'Norman Empire' has been the subject of ongoing debate, with terms such as 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' proving problematic to apply in a twelfth-century context.[693] In the strictest architectural sense, however, the description of 'colonial' behaviour can be applied to the imposition of a Romanesque architectural style which

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[689] Caroline J. Goodson, 'Roman Archaeology in Medieval Rome' in *Rome: Continuing Encounters Between Past and Present* edited by Dorigen Sophie Caldwell and Lesley Caldwell, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 12.

[690] J. C. Higgitt, 'The Roman Background to Mediaeval England', Journal of the British Archaeological Association Volume 36 (1973): p 1.

[691] Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, Oxford University Press, 27, 32.

[692] Gillingham, *The English in the twelfth-century: imperialism, national identity, and political values*.

[693] For an excellent historiography of major studies which examine these concepts, see Marjorie Chibnall. 'The later twentieth century: empire and colonisation' in *The Debate on the Norman Conquest,* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, 115-125; See also John Gillingham, 'The Beginnings of English Imperialism', *The English in the twelfth-century: imperialism, national identity, and political values*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press 2000), 3-18.

referenced classical architecture, on a scale which set it apart from Anglo-Saxon building practices. Without entering into the debate on aspects of continuity and upheaval which surround the Conquest, it is still possible to see a marked change in the architecture of the long –twelfth century. Anglo-Norman visitors to Rome, mostly churchmen such as Gerald of Wales, Henry of Blois, Osbert De Clare, John of Salisbury and Master Gregory would have been familiar with the remains of such architecture in the Holy City.[694] However, this thesis argues that monumental Romano-British buildings present at the case-study sites and visible in the twelfth century would have provided ample models for this emulation process, instead of those seen at Rome. While monumental scale cannot be equated directly with the re-use of building material, in a way it still evokes the Roman past in an articulated relationship with the architecture of empire.

Several studies with an art historical focus emphasise the transportation and re-use of building materials from Rome in an 'odyssey of stone'.[695] During the middle ages, the effort required to convey building material over long distances and difficult terrain became part of the appeal of building in a monumental style with materials recovered from the Holy City. However, at the case-study sites, the Norman relationship with Rome and the Roman past differs from this model. Here, Normans expressed their own ambitions for authority by tying an overarching sense of r*omanitas* into the particular local histories and legacies of English towns. In England following the Norman Conquest, localised re-use became inherently meaningful. The completeness of Norman rebuilding of all major churches and castles at the case-study sites suggests that not only were the money and opportunity available, but that the Norman agenda to modernise the country was "a means of indicating, both politically and culturally, who was in charge".[696] The Norman elite perceived the impressive standing building material at St Albans, Chester and Colchester as conveying a sense of *romanitas* that was most likely different from that at Rome, but nonetheless as meaningful.

Additionally, the re-use of Roman remains seen in pre-Conquest Norman churches indicates that perhaps the case studies sites may have been patronised by those who wished, not only to reference Saxon continuity, but also the Norman past. Roman re-use was not simply romanitas, it was *Normanitas.* The decision to build on a massive scale using Roman remains demonstrated the social and political climate of post-Conquest England, where the Norman

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[694] Higgitt, 'The Roman Background to Mediaeval England': 10-11.

[695] This term was first coined by Paul Binski and explored in 'The Cosmati and romanitas in England: an overview', in *Westminster Abbey: The Cosmati Pavements*, edited by Lindy Grant and Richard Mortimer, Cortauld Institute Research Papers 3, (Farnham, Surrey, Ashgate; 2002), 119-123; this phenomenon is also adressed in: Esch, 'On the re-use of Antiquity; The Perspectives of the Archaeologist and of the Historian', 15; and several studies of Dale Kinney and Caroline Goodson, which examine re-use in a medieval Roman setting.

[696] Fernie, The architecture of Norman England, 24-25.

buildings reflected the prestige, power and imperial undertones of classical Rome, and enhanced Norman rule by association. The case studies demonstrate that Norman political control in England both required and created specific conditions where the emulation of Rome was expressed through monumental remains in the recently conquered territory.

6.4 Twelfth-century literary interpretations

The processes of re-use in twelfth-century England were determined by the specific historical circumstances at each case-study site, and these conditions were also part of a wider occupation of England following the Conquest. This bears comparison to other examples of the construction of power. Documents such as the *Annals* of St John at Colchester, which described the construction of the castle, along with early charters seen in all case studies, reveal historical information about re-use in the immediate post-Conquest period. These documents show the increased emphasis on the authority of the written word, which emerged in the late-eleventh century, and also the greater contact and cultural exchange with the continent that was brought by the Norman Conquest. This movement led to increased circulation of texts which were considered universal, or Roman, and may explain in part why post-Conquest authors not only resorted to classical rhetorical tropes, but also referenced the Roman physical past in early texts.

In the later, literary, stages of the Norman power-building process, these conditions also demonstrate influence from the Twelfth-Century Renaissance. This led to the creation of historical and literary documents such as annals, chronicles, hagiographies, praise poems and urban descriptions which mention or discuss an engagement with the Roman remains at each site. This later phase of literature was produced between the mid-twelfth and the mid-thirteenth centuries and included Roger of Wendover's *Flores Historiarum* and several texts of Matthew Paris at St Albans, Lucian's *De Laude Cestrie* and the anonymous praise poem at Chester, as well as the various *Historia* which record the myth of St Helena and Constantine produced at Colchester. Some references to re-use even describe the pre-Conquest period. These include Matthew Paris' descriptions of the excavations of Eadmer and Ealdred and William of St Albans' description of the anonymous Briton in his late twelfth-century *Vita*, but we must note that these were still produced in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The chronological range of the texts which describe Roman buildings is clearly of a greater range than the architectural aspect of the case studies, due to the *longue durée* of literary and cultural traditions. This delay in material re-use and texts which discuss this phenomenon indicates two distinct phases of interest in Roman material culture — that is, the construction of buildings ranges from the late-eleventh century through to the late-twelfth-century, while texts

which describe re-use or an engagement with the Roman past range from the mid-twelfth-century to the early thirteenth. This creates a problematic lag, where literature of the period described the material reality around fifty years after it was created, and suggests that archaeological re-use and literary descriptions may be part of different cultural traditions. However, the lateness of the literary record may simply reflect the types of texts that were produced immediately post-Conquest, compared with those at the tail end of the century.

Over the course of the twelfth-century, perfunctory historical records were replaced by more detailed and imaginative renderings of the Roman past. There was an increase in memorial and historical writing,[697] which had political and royal interests, and meant that all aspects of the Conquest, including the re-use of Roman remains, were recorded in greater detail than ever before.[698] The creativity and 'new intellectual paradigm' of England in the twelfth century placed emphasis on natural explanations and systematic investigation of one's surroundings.[699] This unprecedented engagement with the physical world and material surroundings, described by Antonia Gransden as 'realistic observation',[700] can be seen in all of the case-study literature. Historical reminiscence combined with a greater interest in the physical world meant that the Roman material past was an integral part textual production in all case-study sites.

The cultural conditions of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance led to the production of accounts which described fantastical excavations or itinerant journeys through past and present Roman landscapes. Because this thesis addresses a kind of 'classicism' and realistic observation specifically relevant to English writing about landscape and architecture, it is the interplay between the Conquest and wider cultural movements of the twelfth-century which provided new ways to understand re-use. There may also have been a persistent oral tradition which transmitted knowledge of material re-use, and it is possible that monastic environments, which had a profound impact on all literary culture, may not have engaged fully with material realities until the completion of their own buildings in the later twelfth-century. The case studies show that the re-use of material culture drove developments in literary traditions, which reverses the assumption that cultural ideas are primarily transmitted through literature. Once the Anglo-Norman elite conquered England, they were then better placed to write about it from the middle of the twelfth-century.

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[697] Warren Hollister's monumental study espouses that historical writing and a revised understanding of the world significantly affected governance in England. C. Warren Hollister, 'Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1997), 1-17. See also, R.W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 160-162.

[698] Hollister, 'Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', 5.

[699] Hollister, 'Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', 8-9.

[700] Gransden, 'Realistic Observation in Twelfth-Century England', 29-51.

Monumentality, imperial ambition and the engagement of texts with the material record form an important part of Anglo-Norman culture, which was expressed via the re-use of Roman remains following the Conquest. The architectural and literary examples from the case studies fit within a cultural milieu of the twelfth-century and the post-Conquest political landscape.[701] However, processes of re-use were also influenced by wider pan-European twelfth-century cultural developments.[702] These were not discrete developments. Rather, the Norman social order created the conditions whereby twelfth-century cultural changes could thrive, and these changes in turn supported the aims of the king and the ruling elite via writings about secular institutions. The re-use of Roman material culture and the portrayal of the Roman material past were an integral part of this process, as they provided the means by which monumentalism and wide-scale architectural expansion could interact with memorial literature. Re-use in England expressed the characteristics of the intellectual re-birthing of the long twelfth century; however, the case studies have shown that re-use was also a phenomenon which was localised in England. It informs our understanding of the construct of Romanesque architecture, but not in a way that was necessarily contiguous with continental developments or re-use at Rome.

6.5 Monasticism and locality in a re-use context

References to Roman imperialism and re-use in material culture coincided with the introduction of monastic reform which placed emphasis on economic expansion and a rethinking of monastic practices in Europe during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Following the Conquest of England, this movement led to the construction of large and often urban Benedictine monasteries such as those at St Werberg's in Chester and St John's in Colchester. It also played a role in the refoundation of the monastery at St Albans, which was later supported by a modest

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[701] Other contemporary accounts which relate parts of twelfth-century English history to Rome, are William Fitzstephen's description of London; William of Malmesbury's reproduction of the Hildebert of Lavardin poem in praise of Rome and his description of Carlisle; the obituary of William I describing him as Caesar; and Henry II's later twelfth-century judicial reforms framed in terms of Roman law. In the material record, York, Canterbury and Winchester cathedrals among others also re-used Roman materials or employed Romanesque architecture.

[702] Tadhg O'Keefe criticises the pan-European approach to Romanesque architecture which fails to take into account localised developments. He challenges the notion that historical and intellectual developments in the 11th and 12th centuries led to the creation of a universal understanding of architectural style in this period. This thesis supports this idea, and instead proposes that 'Romanesque' operates at a national and even local level at all case-study sites. The re-use of Roman building material is expressed differently at each site, and this in turn leads to a regional manifestation of architectural style. Continental literary developments still play a vital role in the cultural developments in England, however. Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Archaeology and the Pan-European Romanesque*, (London: Duckworth, 2007), 10.

town. The products of sophisticated and literate monastic circles may well have been formed on the pattern of royal and imperial antecedents, but they represent an entirely different set of aims and values. This movement altered the manner in which the past was recorded, as knowledge and descriptions of Roman history and re-use became more prevalent within these communities. The new monasticism also created the conditions in which such literature could be transmitted and popularised. While royal or secular authority seemed to drive the construction of many post-Conquest buildings and the re-use of Roman remains, the role of monastic institutions in facilitating this process cannot be overlooked.

In each of the case studies the local monasteries played a significant part in the re-use of Roman remains and the creation of texts which discuss Rome's material legacy. Obviously, monasteries of the post-Conquest period relied heavily upon secular monastic patronage and had a strong relationship with the Norman elite, with most among their ranks being drawn from the families of the nobility. However, the pursuit of separate interests often contributed to conflict with their secular peers. The investiture crisis of the late eleventh century led to monasteries' need to assert their power against royal land interests, as well as other monasteries, which in turn led to increased references to the past in order to establish their authority.[703] The re-use of Roman remains was an integral part of this process, and contributed to widespread monastic engagement with Roman material culture in both architecture and literature, which had a different nuance to re-use in a secular context.

Following the Conquest, the new Norman monastic houses had ambivalent relationships with their Anglo-Saxon predecessors. At St Albans, Paul of Caen supposedly destroyed the tombs of the Anglo-Saxon abbots, yet we see his new twelfth-century abbey church incorporating recognisable stonework from the Anglo-Saxon church into the prominent and significant south transept. Also at St Albans, accounts of the early Christian saint's life feature interludes from British and Anglo-Saxon historical events, and the late Anglo-Saxon abbots were credited with the salvaging of stone that was for eventual use in the Norman Romanesque abbey, along with other precious Roman artefacts. The monks of St John's at Chester chose to build their Norman church very close to the Anglo-Saxon church in the ruins of the Roman amphitheatre, and St Werberg's, Chester and St Botolph's in Colchester were dedicated to local Anglo-Saxon saints, while re-using a great deal of Roman building material. Additionally, St John's at Colchester produced several texts which engaged with the myth of St Helena, which was already prevalent in Anglo-Saxon literary traditions. In these ways, Norman institutions superseded their Anglo-Saxon precursors, while still promoting several aspects of their past. This demonstrates that Norman monasteries

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[703] Brian Golding, 'The Anglo-Norman Church and the Papacy', in *Conquest and Colonisation: The Normans in Britain, 1066-1100 revised edition*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 147-149;

had a vested interest in continuity with Anglo-Saxon cultural practices, which is at odds with contemporary accounts of senior churchmen struggling to acknowledge the religious legacy that they had inherited.[704] The evidence from the case studies shows that the relationship between Norman and Anglo-Saxon institutions can be greatly informed by the ways in which each period re-used the distant Roman past.

With the transition from Anglo-Saxon to Norman rule, monasteries also expended considerable resources justifying their existence in the new Norman political order. This resulted in programs of interest in local saints and attempts to recover native monastic histories, and monasteries often went to great lengths to fabricate aspects of the past.[705] As part of this process, the case studies demonstrate that in England curiosity in remains from Rome was supplemented by more localised attention on material remains, leading to their subsequent re-use. A great deal of scholarship examines the ways in which material was transported from Rome to other locations in the medieval period, particularly on the continent, but also in England.[706] However, the case studies do not contain any evidence that material was transported from Rome, but all demonstrate that local Roman remains were utilised as part of Norman building programs at each site. In addition to this, re-use may have also played a role in cementing connections with Normandy, as re-use was a prominent part of church building where localised Roman remains could be sourced.

Local geography and Roman remains were used in attempts to celebrate the longevity and antiquity of indigenous monastic institutions, and it was generally early Christian local saints or Roman historical figures which provided the historical models by which this was achieved. At St Albans, the architectural re-use and literary creations which discuss Roman remains did not range any further afield than the ruins of Verulamium situated in immediate proximity to the abbey. St Werberg's at Chester did produce a text which drew many architectural and material parallels with Rome, but this was heavily grounded within an itinerary of the local landscape. St John's at Chester shows considerable re-use of locally salvaged Roman building material salvaged from the directly adjacent amphitheatre, with which it shared and enduring precinct well into the later

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[704] Lanfranc was to have said to Anselm "These Englishmen among whom we spend our time" have set up saints for themselves; which shows that there was some difficulty maintaining connections with the Anglo-Saxon past through the lives of English saints. Eadmer's *Life of Anselm*, 51, in Clanchy, 'Church Reform', p 69.

[705] Robin Fleming, 'Christ Church Canterbury's Anglo-Norman Cartulary', in in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, (; Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1997), 83; Crick, 'St Albans, Westminster and some twelfth-century views of the Anglo-Saxon past': 65; Golding, 'A Colonial Church?, 171-172. Hugh M. Thomas, 'Church, Saints, England and the English', in *The English and The Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity, 1066-1220*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 286-287.

[706] Such as Henry of Blois' transferral of statues from Rome, for use in Winchester Cathedral and his palace at Wolvesey. Binski, 'The Cosmati and romanitas in England: an overview', 121-122.

Middle Ages. St John's at Colchester had a strong relationship with the vernacular institution of the castle, but its texts were also concerned with the ancient patronage of St Helena and the portrayal of localised St Helena and Constantine myths.

As we know that many of these literary and architectural projects were also undertaken by pre-Conquest houses, the Anglo-Saxon past and localised re-use traditions are inescapably intertwined. The use of Roman British remains, as opposed to those taken from Rome, urges for a re-interpretation of the authority of Roman Britain as a historical institution in the Middle Ages. Previous studies have emphasised Rome as the site from which re-use was most prevalent, for obvious reasons as it was the centre of the Roman Empire and site of the current papacy. However, it is crucial that any study of the re-use of Roman remains takes into account overlooked examples in England that were sourced in a local context. Many of these have been presented here. Post-Conquest monasteries derived their power, explored their past and utilised for edification and instruction, the processes and records of the re-use of remains. The case studies show that local Roman remains were far more relevant and authoritative within the monastic consciousness than previously understood.

This prevalence had already been perpetuated by pre-Conquest institutions, and allowed monasteries to promote their own local past and its relationship to the Roman historical record. The re-use of Roman remains also became the medium by which monasteries asserted their power against their predecessors, encroaching secular authority and monastic competitors. Evidence presented in the case-studies shows that this was a far more nuanced process than previously thought, as it was translated through Anglo-Saxon monastic attitudes towards the past and re-use. The ambivalence of the Normans towards aspects of the Anglo-Saxon past should be revised to incorporate Roman re-use via these Anglo-Saxon monastic institutions. This thesis has provided an alternative or supplementary perspective for understanding both re-use and monastic interests of local Roman history through Anglo-Saxon cultural transmission.

While the monasteries in the case studies referenced local re-use traditions, several of these quickly became important on a wider scale. The thirteenth century book of St Albans was composed with detailed illustrations and annotations to the Latin text in Anglo-Norman French, implying that this was meant to be viewed by lay audiences and important patrons who visited the abbey.[707] The myth of St Helena was widely adopted by several prominent twelfth-century

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[707] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Thelma Fenster and Christopher Baswell additionally argue that the book's poor quality textual composition contrasted with its lavish illustrations, imply that the book was intended as an exemplar, from which many other books could be produced. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Thelma S. Fenster 'Introduction' in *The Life of St Alban by Matthew Paris*. (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 17-19. Christopher Baswell, 'Mixed, Evolving Audiences of Monks and Aristocrats' in *The Life of St Alban by Matthew Paris*. (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 184-186.

Latin authors who also achieved a wide readership by the middle of the twelfth century.[708] Praise poems of the town of Chester found their way into Ranulph Higden's monumental *Polychronicon*, which was found in over 120 manuscripts in the following centuries.[709] Thus the literature and hagiographies of the local and Anglo-Saxon St Helena and St Albans became part of a collective Norman consciousness. They shaped the formation of the post-Conquest Anglo-Norman identity through association with the Roman and Anglo-Saxon pasts.

The role of these towns as important places of royal power following the Conquest meant that monasteries were keen to emphasise their association with the Roman past. St Albans routinely hosted members of the Anglo-Norman elite, and Colchester's monastery had close connections with one of the major royal castles. Within a hundred years of the Conquest, local myths and hagiographies had been recorded and considerably embellished. Literary ideas which inspired building work, perhaps such as the building "on the palace of King Coel" at Colchester Castle, in turn became substantial supplements to original literary material. Thus, materiality and references to the Roman past became an integral part of these myths over the course of the twelfth century. The Roman origins of St Alban and St Helena, and the additions to their stories which feature the re-use of Roman remains led to the promotion of these British saints in their local environments. Hence, monastic literary developments of the twelfth century may have contributed to the development of an Anglo-Norman identity structured around local religious and political occurrences, which was distinct from pre-Conquest ideas of *Normanitas*.

The case-study evidence also informs the scholarly discussions of Romanesque architecture in relation to indigenous and pre-Conquest styles. Art and architectural historians now understand that buildings in England identified as 'Romanesque' did not necessarily derive from a post-Conquest environment, and that late-Saxon Romanesque also constituted a large part of the development of this architectural style.[710] It is also understood that the development of insular 'Romanesque' did not, and should not necessarily fit into a cohesive categorisation of this

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[708] William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth's versions of the legend ensured that St Helena, and her Roman Colchester origins, became widely disseminated across England and parts of Normandy around sixty years after the first reference to St Helena with Colchester.

[709] Ronald Waldron, 'Introduction' in *John Trevisa's translation of the* Polychronicon *of Ranulph Higden, Book VI. An edition based on British Library MS Cotton Tiberius D vii*.(Heidelberg: Middle English Texts Series, 2004), xiii.

[710] Tadhg O'Keefe summarises the situation regarding buildings in England which feature the re-use of Roman material and reference Anglo-Saxon architectural traditions by stating that "they represent different heterogeneous stabilisations of an architectural inheritance that had fragmented from late Antiquity." O'Keeffe, *Archaeology and the Pan-European Romanesque*, 10.

style, which was instead mostly influenced by continental traditions developed from Carolingian and Ottonian architecture in the north of Italy and south of France.[711]

At St Albans, the Norman Romanesque abbey drew partially from these Anglo-Saxon models, with the re-use of Anglo-Saxon columns, herringbone, and the 'stacked triangle' geometric decorative technique seen in the tower. The monks also relied heavily upon the re-use of Roman stonework, which existed as part of a local salvage tradition dating to the Anglo-Saxon period at all three case-study sites. St Albans demonstrates engagement with Anglo-Saxon architectural style and it is possible that this is the result of the Saxon foundation of the minster at St Albans, as well as the early date of texts which reference the proto-martyr. The monks of St Albans had clearly already drawn upon the traditions of the late-Roman saint throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. This is not to say that buildings at Colchester and Chester do not revive or perpetuate such traditions by the Norman period. Their use of sites and Anglo-Saxon salvage areas for Roman building material demonstrates continuity with the Anglo-Saxon past, and parish churches such as Holy Trinity in Colchester also adapted Anglo-Saxon architectural features into their Norman counterparts. The adoption of Anglo-Saxon Romanesque styles in post-Conquest buildings in the case studies contributes to current discourse on Romanesque architecture, and correlates with what Eric Fernie describes as the 'Saxo-Norman Overlap'.[712]

In the nineteenth century, English Romanesque was considered as a variation on a universal pan-European model, propagated largely through various Norman conquests across France, Italy and southern Germany, with England as a regional outlier.[713] However, scholarship now understands that Romanesque did not develop in a single place. Monuments can be understood in regionally developed 'clusters', where some buildings may share common characteristics. In recent years, the recognisably ecclesiastical construction type of the conquerors has also focussed on the exchange between English and continental architectural traditions.[714] Scholarship now attempts to understand the diverse indigenous models of construction, such as in Kai Kappell's study of the monastery of La Roccelletta in southern Italy.[715] The case-studies

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[711] George Zarnecki, 'Architecture', *Romanesque*, (London: A and C Black, 1989); O'Keeffe, *Archaeology and the Pan-European Romanesque*, 21; From Rosamond McKitterick, *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*,(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and T Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages c. 800-1056*, (London: Longman, 1991).

[712] Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, 20.

[713] Roger Stalley, *Early Medieval* Architecture, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 217-219.

[714] Christopher Brooke, 'Introduction' in *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque,* edited by Sarah Macready and F.H. Thompson, (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1986), 1-7.

[715] Kai Kappell, 'Architecture as a visual memento? S. Maria della Roccella in Calabria', *Romanesque and the Past: Retrospection in the Art and Architecture of Romanesque Europe, Proceedings of the British Archaeological Association,* edited by John McNeill, Richard Plant (London, 2010), in press.

provide several examples whereby eleventh and twelfth-century engagement with the Anglo-Saxon past, featuring the re-use of Roman building material, created a native Romanesque.

The monastic houses in the case studies are primarily Benedictine, with two Augustinian houses at St John's in Chester and St Botolph's in Colchester. We are thus well placed to understand how particular monastic orders approached the Roman material past. It is exclusively the Benedictine houses which produce writing for the case studies of this thesis, demonstrating that the rise of post-Conquest Benedictine foundations contributed significantly to the promotion of textual descriptions of re-use. Benedictine houses appear to have a vested interest in the promotion and use of the Roman past in literature above other monastic orders. In the immediately post-Conquest era, as religious houses jostled for status, perhaps this order had the most to gain from references to the Roman past. The Benedictine houses of St Albans, St Werberg's and St John's, Colchester were certainly powerful beneficiaries of twelfth-century literary traditions, and capitalised on their relationship with Roman material remains. Paul Binski discusses the "heroic mode of Benedictine patronage," which demonstrates Benedictine literary and architectural traditions that required the transportation of stone from Rome.[716] While re-use at these case-study sites operates in a local context, the particular Benedictine interest in both architectural and literary re-use suggests a definitive and order-wide engagement with the Roman past.

Augustinian houses remained relatively modest in this period, and have seemingly less interest in texts, resulting in few literary traditions which promote the Roman heritage of monastic sites. At Augustinian houses, the re-use of Roman building material may relate more to an economic rationale, as the cheaper cost of salvaging, rather than quarrying, building stone may have encouraged this practice. While the Augustinian houses of St John's at Chester and St Botolph's at Colchester demonstrate an almost exclusive use of Roman building material in their monastery churches, they apparently did not produce references to the Roman past in literature. The relationships maintained with the urban communities served by Augustinian lay-clergy, and the fact that these secular canonry were more involved and popular in the towns of Chester and Colchester,[717] may have encouraged continuity with the Anglo-Saxon past and less need to assert themselves through reference to Roman remains in texts. The communities of St John's Chester and St Botolph's in Colchester sought education from the continent following their decision to adopt the Augustinian rule, but they retained their English heads of house and had seemingly less to lose by the processes and upheavals of the Conquest. Their decision to adopt an order was

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[716] Binski, 'The Cosmati and romanitas in England: an overview', 119-123.

[717] As opposed to the protracted legal disputes of St Albans and St John's, Colchester, which sometimes erupted into violence against the monasteries and their monks.

motivated by a desire to participate in continental monastic traditions, but this was more insular and self-driven, rather than imposed by leading churchmen installed following the Conquest.[718] In contrast, their Benedictine counterparts at St John's in Colchester, St Albans and St Werberg's, were re-founded as part of large-scale movements driven by wealthy and important benefactors.

The main difference in the way Augustinian and Benedictine communities re-used Roman remains lay in the way they wrote (or did not write) their histories. There may be a link between conscious engagement with the Roman past and the relative wealth or power of post-Conquest religious houses, as Augustinian houses did not produce the elaborate cartularies and *historia* which characterise Benedictine monasticism of the twelfth century. The number of Augustinian houses which received foundation grants from landowners with purely local interests, as opposed to prominent members of the Anglo-Norman elite, was high. This indicates that there was a significant social gap between the crown and these members of the lower nobility.[719] Augustinians were smaller and more communally involved houses, which had less need to assert their authority against other monastic institutions. The case studies demonstrate a correlation between orders which produce conscious references to the Roman past in literature, rather than simply the re-use of building material, with increased economic prosperity and political prestige. This cycle is reflexive rather than causal, and may explain on a wider level why the reformed Augustinian order focussed less on literary culture. Lesser impetus to produce texts and record early Augustinian history meant that the extent and generosity of support that the house could attract was reduced, resulting in a lowered capability to finance historical ventures.[720] It was left to the Augustinian architectural legacy to convey *romanitas* and engagement with the Roman past.

Augustinian engagement with the Roman past may have been for different, more reflective, extroverted or educational reasons than was the case with the ascendant, Benedictine houses. The 'institutional memories' produced by Benedictine and Augustinian houses in the case studies both feature material re-use on a monumental scale in buildings. However, the Benedictine approach to the past, particularly the Roman past, is significantly more involved. This may be the result of the initial need to use historical writing against competing claims, but the tradition which promoted memorial compositions and references to the Roman past quickly increased prosperity for all Benedictine houses across all of the case-study sites. It shows that the historical developments and conditions of different monastic orders resulted in different ways of

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[718] Michael Clanchy investigates the problems of integration of Norman Benedictine monks and church leaders with their English counterparts. with Clanchy, 'Church Reform', 69-71.

[719] Herbert, 'Augustinian Priories in Twelfth-Century England', 131-145.

[720] Herbert, 'Augustinian Priories in Twelfth-Century England', 138.

approaching and re-using Roman material remains, which, in turn, had economic consequences over the course of the post-Conquest period.

Re-use and references to re-use do not simply demonstrate secular Norman attempts to establish themselves over their newly acquired territory, but also demonstrate competing interests within other Norman social and political hierarchies. Secular or royal interests interacted with monastic institutions through processes of re-use in both buildings and texts, and each of these agents had specific and localised relationships with the Roman past. This was expressed via differing ways of approaching Roman remains in texts, and re-using Roman building material. The case studies have revised traditional approaches to the Conquest and the development of Romanesque architectural style, by suggesting instead deference to the Anglo-Saxon past and native re-use traditions. The Roman past and the re-use of Roman remains formed a large part of the Norman and monastic 'architecture of remembrance', but they also shared a complex and nuanced place with other competing cultural influences.

6.6 The re-use of Roman building material

The historical developments of the Norman period inform the ways in which physical material was incorporated into buildings during the process of re-use. This is an integral part of this thesis, as it is the treatment of such material as a 'code' or series of re-use strategies which allows us to understand medieval attitudes to salvaging, recycling and the building material itself. For the most part, this material encompasses the worked sandstone of the Chester case studies, with block sizes ranging from *petit appareil* to the larger stones used in monumental Roman architecture, and potentially re-used in the north transept of St Werberg's. Due to the scarcity of local quarry areas for building stone in the Essex case studies, building material normally refers to the split flints sometimes worked in a *petit appareil* fashion into wall facings, as well as more rubble-like flint, ceramic *tegulae* fashioned in the Roman period, and some larger blocks of Roman stone which may have been brought from further afield and used for emphasis in monumental buildings. All of this building material is unadorned, and is not particularly easy to identify on its own. Instead it can recognised through an interpretation of contextual factors of re-use in each building where it is found.

The re-use of Roman building material in these case studies continued Anglo-Saxon traditions, which then persisted into the high medieval period. Following the Norman Conquest, exceptional amounts of re-use occurred, and many low and high status buildings were constructed using Roman material. We could create an economic rationalist argument for this re-use, where such wide-scale building programs required massive amounts of stone in a short space

of time. This is in line with ideas about modern disposable consumer culture and the needs of hyper-productive societies,[721] but this is only part of the story, and fails to account for medieval reverence towards the classical past so evident in literary culture. The period of building that followed the Conquest was a result of the intense concentration of wealth into the hands of the small number of Anglo-Norman elite, resulting in construction on an unprecedented scale.[722] If this was the case, there may have been little financial incentive for the re-use of building material at these sites and ideological reasons may be provided instead.

Art historians and archaeologists are often keen to downplay the symbolic aspects of the re-use of building material, more often preferring to see it as casual or coincidental instead. Michael Greenhalgh's monumental study of the re-use of marble, tells us that "stones which are left unaltered (i.e. not broken up) within five or ten kilometres of the first building in which they were found indicate casual re-use… and it is difficult to attribute any meaning at all to such re-use."[723] Building material is generally identified as casual re-use, meaninglessly tossed as rubble into the cores of buildings and used as foundational material in wall bases. It is undecorated, and in the case of the Essex building material, primarily unworked beyond the splitting of flints.

However, in contexts where we can identify other aspects of conscious literary and architectural references to the Roman past, as well as the resultant glorification of urban environments from these references, it would be remiss to relegate the re-use of Roman building material to the status of simply casual or functional re-use, and it instead forms a code of re-use, laden with meaning. We may agree with Arnold Esch that "the primary motive for using *spolia* was to make use of second-hand structural elements in order to speed contemporary building projects and to reduce their cost", but even Esch admits that the "pleasure afforded by their re-use value" could be obtained from contextual literary sources.[724] In the case studies, all re-used Roman building material always retains aspects of *spolia,* such as the translation of ideas and self-identifying cultural emblems, through its very nature as a re-used object. The knowledge, in a great many cases, that this material was sourced from Roman buildings means that this acknowledgement of re-use also carried a certain grammar of interpretation and meaning, through association with the Roman surrounds of each town in the twelfth-century.

There are several instances from the literary sources in each case-study which discuss the salvaging, collection and re-use of Roman building material. These references both come from Matthew Paris' *Gesta Abbatum*, where he discusses the Anglo-Saxon abbots, Eadmer and Ealdred

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[721] Kinney, 'Introduction', 2-3.

[722] Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, 10.

[723] Greenhalgh, '*Spolia*: A Definition in Ruins', 83.

[724] Esch, 'On the Re-Use of Antiquity: The Perspectives of the Archaeologist and of the Historian', 23.

who removed building material for use in the Abbey. A further passage tells of the Norman abbot Paul, who put this material to use in the abbey as his predecessors had intended. The discussion of the temple podium at Colchester, mentioned in St John's *Annals* as Coel's palace, also discusses the re-use of building material, albeit as a large piece of masonry. Literary accounts which record the salvaging and re-use of building material allow us to see that this was a conscious process. If medieval writers were aware of the process by which re-used material was obtained, then they would be inclined to speculate as to the Roman origins of the material, leading to potential codified associations of meaning and cultural response.

When we consider David Stocker's model of the re-use of building material, literary references to re-use provide additional information for the justification of iconic re-use, for example, if Roman buildings were destroyed for the casual or functional purposes of building the Norman cathedral, the very fact that this material was recorded in the literature as coming from a Roman site. This means that it was already meaning-laden, and therefore was not be simply a 'casual' or 'functional' act of re-use. This thesis has thus allowed us to refine previous definitions of re-use, casting doubt on whether it can ever be purely 'casual'. In all case studies, building material entered the literary consciousness, which challenges existing notions of wider cultural import for the re-use of material culture.

It is difficult to determine the extent of demolition or removal of Roman building material, and we must extrapolate from what is left onsite and what was built following its removal. In all cases, the removal of Roman remains for future use tended to concentrate around major Norman building projects. There is no evidence that Roman building material was transported from further afield than a few hundred metres, unlike the contemporary example of Chepstow Castle in Wales.[725] At Colchester, the walls, theatre and temple were demolished near Colchester Castle, and the sections of wall near St Mary at the Walls, St Botolph's and St John's were also robbed. At Chester, all major Roman buildings were removed, along with two stretches of the walls which were rebuilt further out. The amphitheatre was robbed of stone to almost ground level, presumably to provide building material for the nearby St John's. At St Albans, the walls nearest the town are completely absent, because they were removed for re-use, along with remains above ground in Verulamium. The remains of the Roman theatre at St Albans are still fairly substantial, as this was the furthest from the abbey and town site. St John's in Colchester is also a likely candidate for Roman brick and flint construction, though no extant fabric survives with which to confirm this.

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[725] Eaton. 'Counting the cost at Chepstow', 31-57.

Certain types of building material were deliberately robbed from Roman buildings to fulfil specific needs of Norman builders, and this can be seen in several buildings in the case studies. The re-used *petit appareil* blocks in the foundations of Colchester Castle created strong, straight lines for structural integrity. It is for this reason that these blocks were deliberately stripped from the walls of Colchester (revealing their internal rubble construction), and piled in huge quantities along the frontages of each wall of the castle. A section of the Roman wall at St Germain's Block and another section of wall from the Mortimer Wheeler excavations were robbed for specific types of building materials, as tile courses and flint were removed carefully from the surrounding walls. The examples of re-use in these case studies which are easiest to identify come from the unmistakably Roman *tegulae* at all sites, as well as the concrete in the podium of Colchester Castle, neither of which were manufactured in the medieval period. These acts of re-use targeted one building material type which was robbed for a specific purpose and re-used in the same context.

The uniform red sandstone of Chester makes it more difficult to identify Roman re-use, as this material is used throughout all building phases (differing from, for example, York, where the Roman use of gritstone identifies instances of re-use). However, there are several factors which help detect where the re-use of building material has taken place. The stones of St John's in Chester demonstrate the same tooling as the nearby Roman amphitheatre, and Lewis Hole marks in masonry in the east end suggest repositioning through re-use. It is possible that St Werberg's also re-used Roman stones, as the masonry in the north transept displays different tooling techniques and irregular block shapes. Indeed, it is he very presence of plaster in mouldings on the north transept which strengthens the argument for the presence of re-used material, as this did not need to be uniform, and in fact adhered better to the irregular salvaged masonry (this will be discussed further in the 'Hidden Re-use' section below).

For sheer volume of material, it is the Norman abbey of St Albans and St Botolph's priory which really demonstrate the extent to which re-used building stone was part of the monumental design agenda of Romanesque churches following the Norman Conquest. These were built out of re-used Roman brick and flint requiring major recovery exercises.[726] A great deal of the St Albans material was most likely salvaged from Roman Verulamium prior to the Conquest, and literature produced at the monastery indicated that the monks of St Albans were aware of this initial salvage process. This suggests that the pre-Conquest abbey had an existing relationship with the Roman past prior to the advent of the Normans. St Botolph's was also formed out of a pre-Conquest community of secular canons however it may have modelled its massive re-use of Roman building material on the earlier church of St Albans. Massive buildings constructed entirely out of Roman

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[726] Nibblett and Thompson. *Alban's buried towns: an assessment of St. Albans' archaeology up to AD 1600,* 135.

masonry may have started as a single instance of design at St Albans or Colchester Castle, and then entered wider collective culture as a model for use by monastic houses in the Essex area.

The re-use of significant amounts of Roman building material in monastic churches and castles represents an agenda of the Norman patrons who commissioned and designed them. There are many contemporaneous Norman churches and large secular buildings which were not built primarily out of re-used Roman stonework, instead preferring combinations of imported Caen stone or other locally sourced stones which were white in appearance. For example, in the Norman period, the White Tower of London and Canterbury Cathedral were built out of Caen stone, Winchester was built out of Quarr stone (sourced from the Isle of Man) and Bath stone, Peterborough and Ely were built from Barnack stone, Gloucester was built out of Painswick freestone, and Norman York Minster was built from Tadcaster stone. These were all whitish limestones, reminiscent of the Caen Stone.[727] York and Gloucester also demonstrate smaller amounts of re-used Roman material, indicating that re-use traditions existed elsewhere, but not nearly to the extent seen at the major buildings in the case studies.[728] This indicates that the re-use of material at the case-study sites was particularly important to those towns which possessed a known Roman history. These histories could be put to use to increase the prestige of each site, in much the same way that imported Caen stone was used to convey the power and prestige associated with the monastic houses founded there by William the Conqueror and his queen Matilda.

The historical links established between Paul of Caen and Gundulf of Rochester, designers of St Albans Abbey and Colchester Castle respectively, may have resulted in a cultural exchange which led to the construction of each of these buildings from re-used Roman material. It is likely that post-Conquest buildings were planned as a whole from the beginning,[729] so the start dates of each building approximately five years apart may have still been orchestrated with this re-use in mind. This is a convincing schema. It is complicated, however, by the fact that Canterbury's Roman past did not result in the re-use of Roman material in the contemporaneous cathedral. While other buildings in Canterbury feature the re-use of Roman material, Lanfranc's leading Norman cathedral did not, despite the scarcity of building material in the region. Instead, the cathedral at

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[727] Tatton-Brown, 'Building Stone in Canterbury c.1070-1525', 71-72; John Crook, *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years*, (Winchester: Dean and Chapter, Winchester Cathedral, 1993), 37–46. D. Phillips, *Excavations at York Minster. Vol. II. The Cathedral of Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux*, (London: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, 1985), 117. Arthur Price, 'The Building Stone', *Gloucester Cathedral and Precinct: An Archaeological Assessment* by Carolyn Heighway, (King's Stanley: English Heritage and the Friends of Gloucester Cathedral, 2003), 49.

[728] E.R. Tate, 'The charm of St Mary's Abbey and the architectural museum, York', (York: *Yorkshire Philosophical Society Annual Report*, 1912), 16.

[729] Fernie, *The architecture of Norman England*, 89.

Canterbury was constructed primarily out of imported stone from Caen, commencing around 1070.[730] Lanfranc chose to build using the expensive material of his lord's penitential house on the continent, implying that Caen stone carried some of the *auctoritas* of the Norman heartland. Lanfranc's links with Gundulf and Paul of Caen in the Essex area clearly did not influence their decisions to build in the following years with re-used Roman material. Although it might be argued that the initial expense of importing Caen stone for Canterbury cathedral may have resulted in the slightly later buildings choosing the less costly re-used material.

Economic considerations must always be a part of our understanding of re-use in monumental Romanesque buildings, although this does not wholly account for the fact that the St Albans stone had been set aside decades earlier for use in the abbey. Economic considerations are also supplemented by literary references which highlight the importance of Roman buildings and building stone, and the pervasive re-use traditions in churches at all case-study sites associated with existing cults of Anglo-Saxon saints. St Albans and Colchester had demonstrably strong links with their Roman past at the advent of the Conquest, and this largely explains their clear desire to continually reference the Roman past in their architecture and literature produced throughout the period. The slightly later foundations of St John's and St Werberg's in Chester, and St Botolph's and St John's in Colchester may have even followed this example. Each of the foundations may have had different motivations for this re-use, as outlined in the introductory section, but all would have derived authority and prestige from such wide-scale use of material.

Many of the parish churches at the case-study sites were founded in the Anglo-Saxon period. Despite this, most were rebuilt in the twelfth-century, indicating that parish church construction was an important agenda of the Norman period.[731] This rebuilding formed an important part of the transition to local parish organisation which coincided with the Norman Conquest.[732] Many of these parish churches re-used Roman building material, and this may have occurred in stone from the late-Saxon period, right through the Conquest period to the late twelfth-century. The Essex churches, such as St Helena's, Holy Trinity, St Mary-at-the- Wall, possibly All Saints', and St Peter's in Colchester, along with St Michael's and St Lawrence's in St Albans, demonstrate a   more visible continuity with Roman fabric and Roman decorative techniques such as herringbone and polychromic banding than their counterparts at Chester. This re-used material and decoration occurs throughout the walls of each church, and is particularly concentrated in towers: which is not surprising as these often tend to be the oldest parts. Holy

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[730] Tatton-Brown, 'Building Stone in Canterbury c.1070-1525.' 70.

[731] Golding, 'A Colonial Church', 166-167.

[732] See J Blair, *Minsters and Parish Churches: The local church in transition 900-1200*, (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988).

Trinity in Colchester demonstrates a striking example of the re-use of building material in this way, where flint and brick were incorporated into the church tower from a very early date.

Roman building material in parish church fabric is not easy to date from the Norman period, as most parish churches have a long history of successive rebuilding since that time. We can assume, however, that Roman tiles still *in situ* in church fabric probably derived from the earliest phase of building in masonry, which was, for most churches, roughly contemporaneous with the Conquest period. The relative scarcity of building material in Essex may have dictated the choice of re-used Roman building material, and brick and flint lent themselves particularly well to the emulation of decorative patterns throughout all periods of church renovation. While the fabric of Essex churches reflects re-use traditions particularly well, the Conquest saw a period of greater construction of parish churches in all case studies, which involved the re-use of Roman building material for a variety of pragmatic and highly meaningful reasons.

The nature of the relatively impoverished urban parish may have created a financial incentive to build near convenient supplies of Roman material, as the patrons of the parish (which would have consisted of the wealthier members of each community) may have settled on the cheaper alternative than importing stone from further afield. Economic rationalism can only take an investigation of parish church re-use so far, however, and we must examine other reasons which may have dictated site choice, the re-use of building material, and decorative copying. Anthony Cutler's understanding of 'use' as opposed to 're-use' as a conscious act is challenged when we consider that even in the context of building material, authorial intention and appreciation by a target audience most likely took place.[733]

6.7 The emulation of Roman decorative styles and building techniques

The re-use of building material at many of the case-study sites was often for deliberate and meaningful reasons. This aspect is further reinforced by the emulation of decoration and building techniques from Roman buildings. While literature plays a role in helping to identify cases of awareness and engagement with the material landscape, the deliberate replication of style and construction methods give us an insight into how medieval patrons and audiences engaged with the built environment. The emulation of Roman building techniques such as stone dressing and capital construction has been examined by Michael Greenhalgh,[734] but the most prominent emulation of decorative style noted in this thesis is polychromic tile banding. This can

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[733] Cutler. 'Re-use or Use? Theoretical and Practical Attutudes Toward Objects in the Early Middle Ages', 1055-83.

[734] Michael Greenhalgh, 'The imitation of Roman techniques', *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages*, (London: Duckworth: 1989), 159-160.

be seen at many parish churches in all of the case-study sites, as well as at St Albans Abbey, Colchester Castle, and St Botolph's in Colchester. It was not adopted uniformly across England, however, and where it is seen at other sites such as Dover Castle and Caernarfon Castle, it is normally attributed to similar attempts at the emulation of Roman decoration.[735]

In the walls of St Albans Abbey and the pillars of St Botolph's, flint and brick was built in layers which did not penetrate the thickness of the walls, and thus there was no structural purpose in their design. In cases where this banding did penetrate all the way through walls, such as at Colchester Castle, it shows a deliberate copying of building style, whereby the bands may have helped to reinforce the strength of the walls. Both types of tile banding have different purposes, either to improve the aesthetic qualities of the buildings or their apparent structural integrity. Medieval builders clearly perceived Roman models as not only artistically stylish, but by copying building techniques, they may also have hoped to translate some of their observed structural permanence and longevity. To a medieval audience, the durability of buildings which still stood hundreds of years after they were built conveyed a great sense of authority and imperial power. In copying decorative banding, medieval builders and patrons translated this inherent meaning into their own buildings. Resonance with Roman remains appears particularly conscious when decorative schemes were copied, because unlike the re-use of Roman sites and building material, there was no strong economic incentive to copy Roman decorative styles.

The west front of St Botolph's priory in Colchester uses Roman brick for decorative effect, without directly referencing Roman decorative techniques. The decoration highlights the blind pointed arch tracery, as well as the angled moulding over the entrance arches. This may have been plastered over and used simply to obtain sharper edges than by using flint, but if left exposed it would have been an aesthetically pleasing polychromy to emphasise the Roman brick (this is discussed further in the 'Hidden Re-use' section). This technique deliberately highlighted the use of the brick, to demonstrate the priory's close connection with the Roman remains nearby. The combination of this tile decoration with small amounts of imported Caen stone in the portals of Colchester Castle and St Botolph's priory may have been an attempt to decorate the lower-quality and less aesthetically pleasing building material that formed the bulk of the building fabric. The Roman brick and flint which surrounded these doorways was paired with higher status Caen stone, creating a decorative schema which increased the prestige of each type of building material. The longevity and authority of the Roman building material combined with the intricately carved royal Caen stone resulted in a mutually advantageous aesthetic schemata.

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[735] Wheatley, 'The Imperial Castle', 112-145.

The use of herringbone decoration can also be seen at several sites. At Colchester Castle, the rounded fireplaces and main internal wall feature extensive use of herringbone brick, and the arched tympana in herringbone in the south transept of St Albans Abbey drew attention to, and complemented, the Anglo-Saxon baluster shafts displayed directly underneath. In each case, these surfaces would probably have been left free of plaster, indicating that the use of herringbone was a deliberate part of the decoration in twelfth-century buildings, highlighting important architectural features and adding interest to blank wall spaces. Herringbone is also found in the tower of Holy Trinity in Colchester, which has been used to date the building as a pre-Conquest foundation. The emulation of herringbone as a decorative style therefore has Anglo-Saxon origins, and often marks the re-use of Roman material culture in smaller Anglo-Saxon chapels.

Harold and Joan Taylor state that the use of herringbone gives no reliable indication of date, and that it tended to be used whenever elongated stones (or brick) were present in the building material supply, including the Anglo-Saxon period.[736] At the Essex case-study sites, it is likely that the presence of brick led to the selection of this decorative style. It also seems to be used both pre- and post-Conquest, and in the case of St Albans Abbey and Holy Trinity, it was employed where Anglo-Saxon remains may have still been visible. This suggests that the use of herringbone may have referenced visible Roman buildings directly in the twelfth-century, and may have also drawn from Anglo-Saxon transmissions of the Roman past via pre-Conquest buildings. Indeed, it seems to heighten the impact of Roman re-use, as Anglo-Saxon herringbone may have been understood as a re-use process from which to draw decorative inspiration. Roman remains provided the physical material for herringbone and some decorative models, but Anglo-Saxon churches perpetuated this tradition and promoted its use as decorative motif in buildings of the Norman period.

The commissioners of parish churches may personally have witnessed areas of high-status vernacular architecture, such as Colchester Castle, or may have been familiar with the environs of monasteries through acquaintance with the recipients of Benedictine hospitality. Those making design decisions at a parish level would not have been of the same social standing as those designing monasteries and castles and may not have had as ready access to these spaces, but conscious and meaningful references to Roman buildings, seen in 'higher status' architecture, may have filtered through to the parish level of design and decoration. Herringbone and polychromy would obviously have been as visible in existing Roman remains to parishioners as it was to more influential patrons, and this may have been emulated directly or via higher status architecture in a form of aspirational emulation. Either way, it is clear that at parish churches in the case studies,

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[736] Harold and Joan Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture, second edition*, 13.

decorative techniques, if not the re-use of building material, were often a deliberate and conscious choice that reflected and engaged with nearby or underlying Roman remains in the area.

Polychromic banding and herringbone patterning does not occur at any of the Chester sites, most likely due to the workable Chester building stone which could be built in straight, uniform courses. It is also possible that the lack of banding at Chester was due to the absence of local Roman models which used the technique. "Alternating dark and light bands of ashlar" were used at Dover Castle as a form of polychromy.[737] This reinforces the deliberate nature of decisions to use polychromic bands at St Albans and Colchester, where there *were* local models to copy, using brick and flint. Polychromy was clearly a conscious quotation of the past as it existed at the towns and employed a method which had become part of a continuous artistic tradition throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. The emulation of decorative styles, however, was not a given. It required the presence of Roman models from which to draw inspiration. But also, as is evident in the case studies, it could feature at sites where the building material was of a fairly poor quality.

Phillippe Buc asserts that object conversion, or the re-use of tiles and flint in polychromic banding in this case, establishes complex relationships of superiority over the re-used object. [738] He also states that what is signified in this process (i.e. the Norman decorative scheme copied from Roman models) is more pleasing than the object which signifies it (the re-used tiles and flint arranged in a banding pattern).[739] Hence, the emulation of polychromy both asserts pre-eminence over the re-used material, while still retaining enough of its unrefined aesthetic that its meaning can be translated. Polychromic banding was a way of expressing creative deference to an existing Roman decorative tradition, accounting for a lack of decent building material, and asserting Norman identity and superiority at both Colchester and St Albans. All but the last of these conditions were lacking at Chester, which may explain the absence of the practice outside of the Essex area.

Descriptions of the emulation of building style cannot be found in any of the case-study texts, which is an interesting lacuna in the literature. It may imply that, to the medieval mind, the re-use of Roman building material was not distinct from the manner in which it was re-used. Alternatively, it could imply that decoration and architectural structure were the prerogative of the builder or mason, and did not form part of a literary tradition in the Norman period. This indicates that the re-use of building material and site was seen as more overt ways of referencing the past. Regardless of the literary omission, the ways in which Norman buildings reflect Roman construction and decorative styles says a great deal about medieval interaction with their models.

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[737] Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England*. 128.

[738] Buc, 'Conversion of Objects', 110.

[739] Buc, 'Conversion of Objects', 114.

This emulation demonstrates that in the demolition of Roman buildings, medieval builders took note of how they were built and also sought to recreate or translate some of their perceived structural durability and artistic merit. In those places which featured Roman models, decorative styles and building techniques would have been recognisable instantly to those who used urban spaces. Some art historical studies have tended to overlook the 'cruder' aspects of building design, instead focussing on portable culture or higher-status architectural objects. However, the emulations of herringbone and polychromy should be considered within the scope of the art historical visual data set for re-use. These decoration and building techniques were an integral part of the medieval relationship with their Roman past, and must be considered if we are to approach a more complete understanding of the medieval re-use of material culture.

6.8 Identifiable objects and portable material culture

The art historical preoccupation with *spolia*, as defined by Dale Kinney and Michael Greenhalgh,[740] has led to more in-depth investigation of re-use than in any other discipline, although archaeology provides a slightly different emphasis on the types of material that can be spoliated. The categories of re-use with which art history is most concerned encompass that which is portable (often from Rome or other prominent cities), and has some aspect of visual display.[741] While art historians are prepared to concede the import of the re-use of building material in some cases, they predominantly focus on *objet d'art* in an aesthetic sense. Interestingly and importantly, most of the evidently Roman objects identified in the case studies come predominantly from literary description, rather than existing in the archaeological record. This shows that perhaps medieval people made the same distinction which pervades disciplinary focus today — that Roman objects which were recognisable as such were notable enough to commit to the written record. However, these may still have been discovered in the Norman period, and may have had an important role in the political and social lives of towns or monasteries.

At St Albans, the compositions of William of St Albans and Matthew Paris are littered with references to Roman objects. William of St Albans' account of the transmission of the martyrdom of Alban from an inscription upon the city walls in his preface to the *Vita Sancti Albani* translates the concept of visible Roman inscriptions into this medieval hagiographical setting. While it is impossible for this fictional inscription to have ever existed, William took the potentially familiar

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[740] Kinney, 'Introduction', 1-13; Greenhalgh '*Spolia*: A Definition in Ruins', 75-97.

[741] Michael Greenhalgh's seminal text on *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages*, Duckworth: London, 1989, opens with the definition of 'antiquities' as "structural remains and objects which have an 'artisitic' context- that is, sculptural freizes or coins rather than ploughshares of other utilitarian objects". This raises the question of whether casual and functional aspects of the re-use of building material in an archaeological context apply, as these constitute a utilitarian purpose in the construction of buildings.

artefact of Roman inscription and appropriated it to tell his own story of the patron saint. The interest in inscriptions during the medieval period is well documented, and inscriptions played an important part in the development of ideas about the classical period because they were verbal testimony from the ancients.[742] William relies on this authority to lend credence to his own story, reinforcing that the appropriation of portable and decorated material culture could be used to promote a variety of Norman institutions in the twelfth-century. William's life of the saint also includes several references to highly decorated Roman palaces from which he may have taken literary license and extrapolated out of the ruins of Verulamium.

Paris' detailed description of the Roman cameo in the *Liber Additamentorum* places this important object within St Albans' collection of precious jewels, which was used to secure the influence of powerful female patrons. Its depiction of the Roman god of medicine allowed for its use as a birthing talisman, repurposing the Roman nature of the object for the highly lucrative political machinations of the medieval monastery. Paris also relates several accounts of the discovery of other everyday objects from the Roman site of Verulamium in his *Gesta Abbatum*, where the excavations of Eadmer and Ealdred uncovered all manner of coins, glass, amphorae, sculpture, tiles, wood, stone, drains, and water courses, some of which are later put to use in the monastery by Paul of Caen. St Albans Abbey also features a disparate collection of Roman and Anglo-Saxon columns mixed together in the transept and central crossing tower. These are the only recognisable artefacts which do not feature in a literary account. Their presence demonstrates that the medieval builders recognised such objects and incorporated them in a decorative scheme which blended Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Norman influences. This established a complex relationship with pre-Conquest re-use traditions, which both established Norman control over Roman and Anglo-Saxon artefacts, while simultaneously referring to and drawing authority from the longevity of those traditions.

Several literary accounts composed at Chester describe a similar array of portable or decorative Roman relics. The praise poem and description of Chester, featured in Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*, tells of coins marked with inscriptions of 'Caesar', arches and vaulted dining rooms, large stones with inscriptions of the names of great men, and stones and hollow double-arched vaults beneath the earth. These artefacts may also have actually been found at the town, because they are remarkably detailed accounts. Again, alternative interpretations for architectural space occur here, where 'vaulted dining rooms' may have been used as compositional devices in a similar vein to the numerous 'Roman palaces' found in other descriptions of the case-study towns. The sculpted image of Minerva in St Edgar's Fields at

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[742] Michael Greenhalgh, 'Inscriptions: A cornerstone of interest in antiquity', *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages*, (London: Duckworth, 1989), 173.

Chester survived remarkably intact, and may relate to its use as a shrine site throughout the medieval period. Newstead's theory that this icon was appropriated as a Marian image in an act of *interpretatio Christiani* [743] may ring true, but it is also possible that this image, even in the medieval period, was still thought of as depicting Minerva. The continuation of Roman iconographical representation can be seen in the context of an interest in mythology in the twelfth-century praise poem of Chester (which mentions Hercules at the start, and an extensive list of other Gods- Mars and Mercury, Bacchus, Venus, Laverna, Proteus and Pluto- at the end). Clearly, medieval audiences at Chester had the means to understand the Roman mythos, and this pervaded their material and iconographical traditions. The shrine would obviously not have been used for its pagan purpose, but perhaps an amalgamation of contexts — classical and Christian — ensured its survival.

At Colchester, there are a number of accounts of Roman artefacts which were re-used by members of the Norman elite in the town. The annals of St John describe the royal foundation of Colchester Castle 'upon the podium of the palace of Coel', again reinforcing the interpretation that Roman architectural features came about only at the instigation of lavish imperial commission: transferring the imprimatur of royal and imperial authority to Norman buildings using Roman architectural material or decorative techniques. In this way, buildings associated with royal control appear to rely more heavily on secular or imperial aspects of Classical tradition. The description of Colchester, which can be found in the foundation myth of St John's, uses the presence of minted coins, iron objects, *lapida*, and buildings found beneath the earth, to assert and legitimise claims about the ahistorical figure of Coel.

It is interesting that the term '*lapida*' has not been qualified further, and it could refer to objects as diverse as building stones to a highly precious decorated jewel, such as the cameo of St Albans. Although this thesis demonstrates that there is a complex link between Anglo-Saxon precedents and Norman imperial connotations in the architectural record, it cannot be disputed that a rhetoric of royal 'imperial ambition' existed in literature of the twelfth-century.[744] Contemporary eulogies of William I praised him as Caesar, and Anglo-Norman praise literature referred to William's *imperium* and called him *basileus* (emperor).[745] Concerning re-use at

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[743] Erwin Panofski's study of the Renaissance of the Middle Ages describes this process as the 'principle of disjunction' whereby classical borrowings in the Middle Ages are "invested with a non-classical, normally Christian significance". Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art: second edition*, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1965), 84, 88. One must try to understand this phenomenon in the context of the Middle Ages- that is, *interpretatio Christiani* may have been part of attempts to relate to Rome as the current papal see, and not necessarily the historical church.

[744] Barbara English, 'William the Conqueror and the Anglo-Norman Succession', *Historical Research,* Volume 64, Issue 155, (1991): 234.

[745] English, 'William the Conqueror and the Anglo-Norman Succession', 234.

Colchester, the mother and father of the Roman emperor Constantine were used to legitimate the imperial power of the town in the twelfth century through material links to secular Roman history. The religious importance of this late-Roman saint was also influential. An imperial mother, St Helena also delivered the true cross to Western Christendom, and in this way, she conveyed a dual religious and secular authority for the architectural edifices in the twelfth-century.

Historical descriptions of excavations reveal important attitudes to diagnostically Roman objects, and inform our understanding about whether medieval people used remains from the past consciously. Paris' accounts of Eadmer and Ealdred's St Albans excavations, the 'vaults of past men' in praise poems of Chester, and the unearthing of Roman artefacts at Colchester have all been described as episodes of investigative excavation which deliberately sought aspects of the Romano-British material past. Monika Otter discusses the "grounding" of twelfth-century Latin historiography in the landscape of Britain. She says that topography, or the spatial setting, seem to be an unusually prominent concern in English history and historical hagiography.[746] Otter also discusses the capacity for twelfth-century texts to embark upon processes of 'digging', or 'recovery', which has particular implications for this thesis.

Several of the texts discussed in the case studies contain descriptions of a process of realistic observation or recovery, which read almost like a form of proto-archaeology. The texts describe the processes of recovering or seeing Roman building material *in situ* in the physical environment. These historical narratives, poems and hagiographies are literally recovering the Roman material past, and using it to build the Norman present. While these excavations were not carried out for the sake of uncovering the past, nor were they recorded methodically, they can be described as a sort of medieval antiquarianism. Notably, the decision to write about such episodes demonstrates a desire to engage with the past in historical writing via an interest in material objects. The material and the written word were inextricably and reflexively entwined. Real-world engagement with the material remains of the past generated writing about the materials and their history, which in turn created a Norman understanding (fictional or not) of what those material remains actually were.

Across all three sites, then, there is a strong tradition which records the re-use of certain types of artefacts. These feature predominantly in literary descriptions of high status, decorated or recognisable Roman objects, which are translated in a re-use context ranging from the need to assert the antiquity of a town to a justification for the import of its local saints. When these objects

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[746] Otter, 'Introduction', 2. See also R. W. Southern, 'The Sense of the Past' in *Aspects of the European tradition of historical writing*, (London: Royal Historical Society, 1970), 256; and Antonia Gransden, *Historical writing in England*, (London: Routledge, 1974), 265-295.

are not necessarily portable, such as with drains and foundations, their recognisable *romanitas* still provided a concrete engagement with Roman buildings beyond the simple salvaging of building material. The identification of such artefacts makes these objects seemingly more precious than the re-use of building stone, as they made their way into literary accounts alongside other higher status Roman objects. Narratives which mention inscriptions on the wall and the discovery of an 'old book', such as at St Albans, and the names of great men, such as at Chester, play upon the antiquity and perceived *auctoritas* that a text, and not simply an object, from the distant past could provide.

There is perhaps a sense that, as Roman remains were already ruined and being pillaged for building supplies in the twelfth century, that materiality could be fleeting, and the monks at each site felt that the permanence of texts was the best way to record the presence of these once-common artefacts. In an environment where the monks could see the ruins of the past around them, and were actively contributing to their destruction, the material world must have appeared remarkably fragile. The flourishing of textual production in the twelfth century may have meant that the literary record conveyed a far greater sense of longevity. This interpretation goes against many archaeological assumptions that the material record was more 'permanent', and demonstrates that an understanding of spoliation and processes of re-use can help us move beyond modern interpretations of the past for a medieval understanding of history.

There is an alternative explanation for portable material culture featuring more in textual description rather than the archaeological record, and that is due to the subsequent loss of such objects. However, these objects are consistently featured in literature at the expense of building material or decoration, and we know that they were often highly prized and could easily have survived in monastic collections. Thus it is likely that this anomaly indicates a more meaningful medieval engagement with recognisably Roman objects. It is clear from all case studies that textual description of decorative, identifiable and portable Roman remains legitimated twelfth-century monastic claims, and enhanced the prestige of medieval towns and royal power. Art history has long claimed an association with these 'decorative' and identifiable aspects of Roman material re-use culture, but the case studies show why historical archaeology and literature must also engage with the processes of discovery and veneration of these objects.

6.9 Building function, topography, and the re-use of Roman foundations

In order to understand comprehensively the processes of re-use in each case-study, a variety of building types, including monasteries, castles, urban defences, and parish churches, have been examined. The similarities and differences within these functional typologies across

different sites allow us to apprehend how Norman buildings re-used the geographical environs of Roman settlement, and incorporated underlying or nearby Roman remains within an Anglo-Norman building context. The choice of site for all medieval buildings in the case studies was influenced significantly by the presence of existing Roman settlement, and goes much further than practical economic reasoning. Literary journeys through the landscape also allow us to understand how medieval people moved through their towns, and how they perceived the Roman past and its built environs. These descriptions often provide supplementary evidence to demonstrate meaningful engagement with Roman material remains, and allow us to recognise the importance of these remains to medieval people. These descriptions reflect wider social attitudes towards this type of material culture, and help perpetuate these ideas further throughout literate communities. The continual occupation of burial sites in the case studies also allows us to see that imperial or monumental Roman remains could take a secondary role to the legacy propagated by religion and the Roman church. Consecrated sites retained their significance from the Roman period, through the initial appearance of Anglo-Saxon churches, well into the Norman period. Above all, an examination of the re-use of topography and foundations allows us to see that decisions related to medieval building programs demonstrate meaningful admiration for the underlying Roman remains — an engagement which was, in turn, perpetuated by all who saw and used these urban spaces.

Mental geographical representations and perceptions of topography feature largely in re-use narratives produced at all of the case-study sites. The journey of the anonymous monk through the streets of Chester in Lucian's *De Laude Cestrie* enmeshes the topography of the town with Christian iconography and a comparable model of St Peter's in Rome. At St Albans too, Roger of Wendover's description of the hellish amphitheatre reinforces the Roman topography in the town's medieval consciousness; not to mention his fictional journey of Robert Mercer and the ghost of St Alban, who still took care to point out the standing Roman remains of Verulamium. These descriptions play an incredibly important role in understanding the re-use of Roman sites and geography, as they tell us not only about the re-use of streets, sites and Roman foundations in the medieval period, but also about movement through such landscapes and medieval people's perceptions of this experience. The journey in *De Laude Cestrie* must be considered as part of the *laus civitates* genre, as it seeks to praise every aspect of the town and its geography. But this metaphorical journey also demonstrates spatial networks within the town, as the anonymous monk encounters different religious and secular institutions of varying importance. The descriptions of St Peter's and St Werberg's are lengthy, and their comparisons with parallel institutions in Rome are given greater emphasis within the text, highlighting their importance.

Wendover's description of the Roman amphitheatre in St Albans may indicate how medieval people, especially monks, viewed secular pagan activities which might have taken place in the setting of an amphitheatre. The thought of blood sports, military training and criminal sentencing may have repulsed the early thirteenth century monk, resulting in his choice of this building for the description of hell. Robert Mercer's journey was a more neutral depiction of the Roman town, which may relate to its final Christian purpose with the discovery of Amphibalus' remains. What cannot be disputed, however, is the emphasis which the shade of Alban placed upon the town's topography, demonstrating how Roman remains became the medium of expression of special relationships with past landscapes.

These three instances of "journey" or "itinerary" literature take into account the connection between each town and its Roman history, and show how Roman topography was used to shape literary intentions in medieval composition. Re-use, and descriptions of re-use, can also reveal information about medieval perceptions of the Roman landscape which do not necessarily fit the reality. For example, the "stone palaces" in the *Vie* of Matthew Paris, and the "palace of Coel" in the *Annals* of St John's, Colchester, demonstrate a medieval misunderstanding of the original function of Roman buildings. While less concerned with the historical reality, medieval authors engaged with the Roman landscape in creative ways which do not reflect any practical application. Urban topography, and its relationship with underlying Roman remains, was not only understood in different ways in the medieval period, but was also used to emphasise the importance of certain institutions and create creative narrative accounts of the towns' histories.

At all sites, Roman remains influenced the topographical development of the medieval town, although this was expressed in different ways at each site. Chester and Colchester were significant medieval urban sites, and therefore had extensive fortifications, as well as castles built in each town. In contrast, St Albans' topographical development relates much more closely to the town's religious history and the monastery. The layout of original Roman streets did not have a significant impact on the development of the medieval town of St Albans, as the centre of the town moved up the hill away from Verulamium closer to the abbey. However, the Roman streets at Chester and the High Street of Colchester impacted heavily on successive urban remodelling, and the towns grew almost exclusively over the top of the Roman topography, beginning during resettlement in the ninth and tenth centuries.[747] The layout of the Roman streets at Chester and Colchester may have been particularly attractive to those wishing to redevelop town sites in the medieval period, as both of these retained the relatively uniform square Roman 'playing card' fortress form, as opposed to the larger irregularly shaped Roman civilian town at St Albans. Other

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[747] Phillip Crummy, 'Topographical Evidence' in *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Colchester Colchester Archaeology Report 1*, (London: Colchester Archaeological Trust, 1981), 46-74.

sites which replicate aspects of the re-use of topography and multiple building sites can be found at York, Gloucester and Caerleon in Wales, where major churches and the medieval street plan followed Roman antecedents.[748] All of these sites were military fortresses, and this may indicate that square street layout was a desirable urban form in the middle ages. This argument builds on the work of Thomas Watkins,[749] who examines the evolution of primarily continental Roman towns into the medieval period, and adds the case study sites to this re-use of topography.

Having seen how the layout of Roman streets affected their medieval counterparts, we must now turn our attention to the ways in which particular medieval buildings relate to the Roman topography at each case-study site. This again reveals information about how medieval people perceived particular aspects of the built Roman landscape and the status of their own buildings. The medieval city walls at Chester and Colchester follow the route of the Roman wall on at least two sides, and they have an incredibly prominent place in town's local geography and identity. The Roman walls at these case-study sites underwent periods of maintenance and extension, first in the late Saxon period, and then in the Norman period. This suggests that the urban status of Chester and Colchester, and the continued occupation within the walls in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, led to their upkeep. These were important secular towns, which required working defensive fortifications, ensuring the maintenance of the Roman walls for this practical purpose.

Furthermore, Oliver Creighton's assertion that town walls fulfilled "the desire to display prestige, wealth and social status" in addition to practical protection adds to an interpretation of this process.[750] The refortification and continued use of the Roman city walls may have ensured that they continued to act as a symbolic urban barrier, with associated connotations of Roman military and imperial superiority.[751] The walls at Verulamium were robbed extensively and almost strategically in some places to provide building material for the Norman buildings at St Albans monastery. St Albans had no need to maintain the walls, based on the development of its topography as a shrine site outside the walls of Verulamium. The town itself had started to move near the abbey by the tenth century, and the occupation inside the walled area of the Roman town was left without defensive capacities to the point where it became an unsavoury haunt for

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[748] Phillips et al., *Excavations at York Minster, Volume 1: From Roman fortress to Norman cathedral*, 49-50; Howell, 'The Demolition of the Roman Tetrapylon at Caerleon: An erasure of memory?', 387; Ian Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales: a study of their history, archaeology, and early topography*, (Chichester, Sussex, Phillimore, 1983), 86.

[749] Watkins, 'Roman Legionary Fortresses and the Cities of Modern Europe'. 15-25.

[750] Oliver Creighton and Robert Higham, 'Explanations: Urban Identity, Status, and Defence' in *Medieval Town Walls: An Archaeology and Social History of Urban Defence*, (Stroud: Tempus: 2005), 165.

[751] A similar argument can be made for the decorated sections of the Roman walls at York, which was refortified with the Anglian Tower during the Anglo-Saxon period.

'robbers and thieves.'[752] The Abbey became responsible for the area inside the Roman walls, and it was left to deteriorate simply as a quarry source for the monastery. This shows the contrasting outcomes for Roman defences in the medieval period, where monastic interests overrode the development of an urban topography structured inside city walls.

Monastic houses in all of the case studies lay near Roman buildings or burial sites; however the only monastery which occupied an area inside the city walls is St Werberg's in Chester. This has important repercussions when considering the role of re-use in the context of urban geographical boundaries. In many cities across Europe, the foci of towns which re-used Roman urban geography were situated over centralised Roman remains such as *principia* or Roman bath houses.[753] The only churches located over central Roman remains in the case studies were St Michael's at St Albans, and St Peter's at Chester, both of which were parish churches, and not invested with cathedral or monastic status. St John's in Chester lies near the Roman amphitheatre outside the city walls; and St John's and St Botolph's in Colchester, and St Albans, correlate with extramural burial sites, demonstrating that larger churches in the case studies capitalised on underlying late-Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains and inhumations outside city walls, many of which demonstrate Christian burial practices. These burial sites, by virtue of extramural Roman burial practice, are always on the routes away from, or into towns, which provides an alternative settlement pattern for religious buildings based not on monumental secular buildings at the heart of Roman towns, but on the burial areas of the early-Christian dead.

At each site, there are several groupings of burials, indicating that these areas may have had a continuous history of occupation from the late-Roman period to the high Middle Ages. The St Albans monastery site also related closely to the topographical descriptions of the martyrdom of the late-Roman saint, and featured late-Roman and Saxon burials. The monastic grounds of St Albans near the early Christian burial site (and possible shrine site) came to dwarf the standing remains of nearby Roman Verulamium, indicating that medieval monastic re-use in the case studies clearly did not necessarily occupy the sites of centralised monumental Roman remains. Instead, the spaces on the routes away from towns became sacred to a Christian ethos. Preferences within urban topography related to a varied array of competing factors which influenced site choice and the layout of a town. Monastic sites in these case studies moved away from central places of Roman secular administration to the outskirts of towns, where late-Roman burials attracted monastic settlement as a form of *interpretatio Christiana*. The re-use of burial sites became spaces of conversion, and also referenced the legacy of potentially early Christian

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[752] *Gesta Abbatum,* p 24.

[753] Such as York Minster, which is built over the central Roman basilica and *principia* at the heart of the Roman military fortress*.* Watkins, 'Roman Legionary Fortresses and the Cities of Modern Europe'. 15-25.

burial practice. The re-use of Roman remains in different ways leads to entirely different occupation and building patterns, and ultimately demonstrates the different functions of a settlement in the medieval period.

In all of the case sites, parish churches almost exclusively occupied the sites of Roman buildings, gateways or earlier burial areas. As with major churches and town walls, site choices for parish churches were entirely dependent on the types of remains occupied and the historical processes of individual church foundation. The interesting case of the churches of St Michael's and St Brigid's in Chester demonstrates that parish church sites were often deliberately positioned on or near impressive Roman structures that were not necessarily situated centrally for the practical use of the parish. Likewise, many of the parish churches in Colchester, as well as St Lawrence's in St Albans, were also built away from the central area of occupation. This may have been to capitalise on traffic coming into and out of the town, or it may have been so that Roman structures could be re-occupied or used for building material, which may also have influenced the choice of site at St Mary-at-the-Walls and St Helena's in Colchester. Alternatively, it may have even been for similar reasons as monastic churches, to maintain continuity with late-Roman burial sites, as at St Lawrence's, St Albans and Holy Trinity, Colchester. Pre-Conquest burial areas would have been administered by diocesan centres of power, and they may have already held a meaningful place in the Anglo-Saxon consciousness for church foundation. Roman buildings, as we have already seen, were also symbolic centres of authority in the Anglo-Saxon period, and this would have translated into the Norman period as sites of importance for parish church rebuilding. All parish churches in the case-study sites adhered to the plan on underlying Roman remains, or were incredibly close to architecturally significant sites of previous or continual occupation. It is also important to understand that site choice would have been influenced by a variety of practical and meaningful reasons relating to previous Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlement.

At the more prominent level of architectural design, and engaged with the practical aspects of urban defensive topography of town walls, were the various castles of the case studies. Abigail Wheatley's discussion of the 'symbolic' aspects of castles remove them from a purely functional existence, and emphasises that they were built for the purpose of intimidation, economic control and to reference the architecture of Rome, and even Jerusalem.[754] A convincing aspect of this analysis lies in the fact that Colchester Castle was not built in a place that was easily defensible, nor which made particular sense in military terms.[755] The seeming lack of appropriate defensive conditions at Colchester Castle implies that the emblematic aspects of this building

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[754] Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England*, 128.

[755] It did not guard any major entrances to the town, and it lay to the lower end of the town, at the bottom of the hill, with no lookout capabilities towards London. Bettley and Pevsner. 'Colchester Castle' 273.

were more prevalent than practical function. In addition to the continuation of the site of the Anglo-Saxon royal residence, the re-use of the podium of the Temple of Claudius would have been the primary motivation for the decision to build in this location. The re-use of Roman material and decoration would also have reinforced this topographical choice which referenced Colchester's Roman history.

When buildings emulated Roman style or used recycled Roman material, it might have been a deliberate attempt to invoke some concept of the glorious Roman past to awe or subdue the native British. When William I commissioned Colchester Castle, he might have been not simply emulating Roman construction methods, but trying to demonstrate his superiority over the Roman British past. A very complex rationale might relate to Norman claims of Trojan ancestry.[756] In building on the site where he knew the Romans had been significantly defeated, he might have been asserting imperial power. Alternatively, he may have been trying to claim superiority over the native Britons, by building over a site which signified a historical victory against imperial oppression when Boudicca sacked the city in AD 61. The Agricola Tower was built on a hill overlooking the River Dee, so it does not fit into this schema of interpretation. However, as we have seen, it may still have been built using re-used Roman remains sourced locally.

While the Agricola Tower and Colchester Castle were not used regularly by lower status lay-people, they would still have been visible in the landscape and were constructed to impose the aims of the Anglo-Norman elite on the entirety of the native English population. The podium of the temple underneath the castle would not have been visible to the townspeople of Colchester, but this would have been known about as information disseminated by word of mouth, and also textually, such as in the *Annals* of St John's, supporting Creighton's argument that "the architecture of authority was apparent to the community at large, rather than only personnel admitted into the fortress."[757] Castles may have been perceived in different ways by people of differing social positions, but reference to the Roman surroundings and topography, building material, and decoration would still have been visible to all. The particularly ostentatious re-use of Roman remains at Colchester Castle, starting with topography, and also re-using Roman building material and emulating Roman building techniques and decoration, indicates that the builders of the castle were more interested in promoting obvious and large scale references to Roman remains. Those using or even seeing the castle on a daily basis would have had the symbolism of these physical references reinforced continually, and perhaps more so than in closeted religious buildings or smaller parish churches. In this way, topography and the re-use of Roman remains emphasises

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[756] Thomas, *The English and The Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity, 1066-1220,* 36.

[757] Oliver Creighton, 'Castle as Icon', in *Castles and Landscapes: Power, Community and Fortification in Medieval England*, (London: Equinox, 2002), 66.

particularly the function of castles and fortification sites as statements of royal and imperial power.

Higher status buildings, such as castles and monastic houses, seem to have been engaged differently with Roman material remains in the landscape than buildings such as parish churches and town walls, which were used by the urban community as a whole. This perception may stem from the fact that there is more written in both primary and secondary scholarship about re-use in larger and higher status buildings, and that conscious engagement with Roman material remains should be seen as a 'natural' part of larger Conquest buildings. In parish churches and practical fortifications, economic reasons are cited more readily for the re-use of Roman remains in places that feature fewer literary references (which shares similarities with our understanding of Augustinian vs. Benedictine houses). We assume that these buildings may have had less need to engage with the past and replicate ideas about Rome, but in reality the re-use of topography and Roman decorative techniques was prevalent in both higher and lower status buildings.

The perception that the Norman Conquest was a watershed in architectural, political and social innovation is now widely challenged.[758] The Conquest is now interpreted as a long and complex series of processes which had different levels of effect across all aspects of life in England. However, higher status buildings are generally still seen as 'top down' impositions of authority from the Norman elite, with life for most people undergoing significant change in the architectural record.[759] However, this view is too simplistic, and this thesis reconsiders the idea that larger and higher status buildings, with their conscious displays of engagement with the Roman past, were the most important part of the Conquest. The urban landscape and all of the building types at each case-study site were equally laden with meaning and symbolism, and the re-use of Roman building material and topography is present in different facets across multiple buildings. While parish churches and urban fortifications may have re-used and emulated Roman remains slightly later and in less obvious ways than abbeys and castles, their displays of re-used material and continued occupation in places of Roman topographical importance suggests that for the average person, the re-use of and active engagement with Roman remains was an integral and meaningful part of post-Conquest life.

When we consider several oddities in the re-use of topography, such as awkward parish boundaries in Chester and the impractical site choice for the castle in Colchester, it becomes clear

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[758] Chibnall provides a thorough historiographical overview of secondary literature which examines the various approaches to the Norman Conquest, in Chibnall, 'The later twentieth century: empire and colonisation', 115-125; Please also see Thomas, *The English and The Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity, 1066-1220;* Golding, 'Anglo-Norman England', 177-193.

[759] Eric Fernie, 'England, 1066 to the Late Twelfth-Century', *The architecture of Norman England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19.

that there was far more involved in the continuation of Roman topography than simply accessing convenient building material. Roman remains incorporated into medieval buildings included Roman bath complexes, temples, theatres, amphitheatres, roads, walls, and burial sites. These particular buildings would have had a profound impact upon local topography through the Anglo-Saxon period and into the twelfth century. They certainly often stood out in the local consciousness, as the podium of the temple of Claudius at Colchester, the monumental entrance underneath St Michael's and St Bridget's and the Roman amphitheatre at Chester attest.

These Roman remains significantly influenced all architectural features of the medieval buildings which came to occupy their place in the landscape, and were seen by people of all social orders. From the parish church to the royal castle, the re-use of Roman topography was manifested in a multitude of ways. Monastic settlement indicates reverence for Roman inhumation sites below the ground, parish churches were built over significant Roman remains, including over grandiose central *principia*, and may indicate an aspirational emulation of higher status sites, and the castle's position was dictated by the presence of the monumental temple of Claudius, built by elite patrons, but visible to all. At the heart of the continuation and re-use of topography was the uniform Roman street layout and Roman walls, deference to which formed the basis of medieval urban planning.

6.10 Hidden re-use: A subversive act of power?

There are several examples in the case studies where Roman material was in some way 'hidden' or 'covered' — either by the foundations of Norman buildings or by plaster in the walls of larger monastic churches. Colchester Castle, which was built on top of the Roman temple of Claudius, completely encloses the podium so that it cannot be seen externally, and must be viewed from the basement level foundations. The large Romanesque church of St Albans was covered in plaster both inside and out during the Middle Ages, in accordance with Romanesque architectural fashion which clad buildings in plaster and painted masonry lines in red pigment.[760] The exterior plaster of St Albans has now almost completely fallen away, but the twelfth-century wall paintings on the interior nave pillars remains over the interior *in situ* wall plaster. The current external view of the abbey, which shows lines of coursed tile and flint polychromy, as well as the brick

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[760] Phillips, *Excavations at York Minster. Vol. II. The Cathedral of Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux*, figure 19, and plates 71-83 and 90. Christopher Norton has found a similar case of plaster cladding and raised pointing at Lastingham, and posits that St Mary's Abbey in York was also plastered and decorated with 'red line' masonry. Stuart Harrison and Christopher Norton, 'Lastingham and the architecture of the Benedictine Revival in Northumbria' *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 2011,* 63-105. John Crook has also found plaster on the wall surfaces in the crypt of Winchester Cathedral, and a plaster floor, in John Crook, 'The Romanesque east arm and crypt of Winchester Cathedral', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, (1989), 1-36.

decoration in the Norman tower, would probably have been obscured by plaster in the twelfth century.

St Werberg's Abbey in Chester would also most likely have been plastered, as the irregular tooling and wide mortar joints on the re-used masonry in the walls of the north transept would have been unsightly. The abbey churches of St John's, Chester, and St John's and St Botolph's in Colchester no longer have any traces of plaster either internally or externally, but it is likely that they too would have been plastered to some degree, due to the wide-spread conventions of the English Romanesque style. However, the assumption that major Romanesque churches were plastered proves problematic when we consider that meaningful re-use of Roman remains involves an aspect of visual display. It is not known whether plaster wall render was also employed at parish churches, and there is currently no evidence to suggest that it was. However, the rough nature of wall finishing in parish churches at all of the case-study sites — particularly the Essex churches — implies that plaster coatings may have been seen as necessary. In addition to this, we have already seen that the polychromic banding may have been an indirect emulation of 'higher status' buildings, so the use of plaster in a parish church setting may also have been emulating higher status buildings.

The application of plaster to cover wall surfaces in the Romanesque period implies that the re-use of Roman building material took place for casual or economic reasons, rather than as a conscious act intended for display. It suggests a re-use practice more akin to the 'turning in' of the decorated face of grave markers witnessed in the walls of the church at Bracebridge, near Lincoln.[761] However, this is challenged by the fact that some parts of the plaster facing may have left parts of Roman brick or flint masonry deliberately exposed. Consider the use of herringbone in the south transept of St Albans Abbey and Colchester Castle or the polychromic banding in the nave pillars of St Botolph's Priory, where the absence of plaster may have drawn even greater attention to the Roman building material arranged nearby in decorative patterns.

The use of selective plastering in several buildings may have been a means to draw attention to Roman remains. Despite this, Kate Giles' work on a structuration approach to medieval buildings also confirms that inherently powerful acts may still be conducted out of public view, where meaning was still conveyed in a series of rigidly informed hierarchies. She cites Goffman's ideas about the performance of human interaction in the 'fronstage' (public arena) and 'backstage' (less structured, though not necessarily private interactions).[762] If an object is placed in a meaningful way in a setting where it cannot normally be seen, it still carries inherent

[761] Stocker, 'Rubbish Re-cycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire', 84.

[762] Giles, *An archaeology of social identity: Guildhalls in York c. 1350-1630*, p 20.

meaning implied by the act of re-use. This process becomes an act of power in itself, and knowledge about the re-use may be transmitted for many years afterwards.

The 'hidden meaning' aspects of re-use are reinforced by the fact that several buildings at the case-study sites did not derive any functional purpose from their use of Roman remains. Colchester castle was not built directly on top of the foundations of the Roman Temple of Claudius. Instead, only a single internal wall rests on top of the foundations of the Roman temple. Yet the medieval builders had not wanted to use the podium as a structural foundation, implying that the re-use of the podium carried an intrinsic and meaningful significance. The polychromic brickwork at St Albans Abbey can also be understood in this way, as it did not penetrate the thickness of the wall and thus did not provide any structural support. If the internal core of the nave walls of St Albans Abbey were rubble and the decoration only existed on the outside of the wall surface, then if it were indeed covered by plaster, the re-use of Roman material in banded flint and tile decoration must have been an important act during the construction of the abbey.

When we consider that the account of the construction of Colchester Castle "on the ruins of the palace of Coel" was recorded in the *Annals* of St John's Abbey, then the townspeople of Colchester would certainly have known about the Roman origins of the concrete podium then hidden under the castle. Those who had access to the basement area underneath the castle would have reinforced this knowledge through their experience of the re-used space, and association with the remains may have cemented their own privileged status. Similarly, if knowledge about re-used material and polychromic banding was propagated following the construction of St Albans, St John's in Chester and Colchester, and St Botolph's in Colchester, then its inherent power and authority derived from its relation to Roman buildings may have still applied. This interpretation is at odds with art historical concerns with display and meaning through visible transmission, and archaeological approaches of access and space syntax can inform our understanding of this phenomenon. The case studies demonstrate that re-use did not have to be conspicuous or even visible to convey meaning, and that knowledge about processes of re-use may have been enough to cement their importance in a collective consciousness.

Alternatively, this type of re-use may have been a way of establishing power relations, as those with the knowledge and access to these instances of re-use obtained a more privileged status than those who did not. David Fontijn's work on deposition sites vs. barrow mounds in the prehistoric landscape alerts us to the possibility that invisibility could be a social strategy, where knowledge of hidden sites may have been an authoritative resource, defining insiders from outsiders, and at odds with overall visible ordering.[763] Considering that hidden re-use occurred in

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[763] David Fontijn, 'The significance of invisible places' in *World Archaeology*, Volume 29, (2007): 81.

the majority of monumental Romanesque buildings in the case studies, it may be that hidden re-use was an integral assertion of Conquest dominance. The Anglo-Norman elite who commissioned and constructed such architecture were therefore entitled to knowledge of certain 'secret' or 'hidden' re-use practices, which conveyed their own particular relationship with the Roman past. While hidden re-use apparently eliminated the display aspects of Anglo-Norman audience reception, it instead created a subversive schema of knowledge transmission, potentially amplifying the initial meanings conveyed by the re-use of Roman building material.

Hidden re-use may also have been a performative process rather than a single act. In this scenario, once the initial act of re-use was covered over, it had already generated enough discourse on its occurrence during construction that it disseminated perceived power for the foreseeable future, via oral and written communication. The fact that twelfth-century sources record that Colchester Castle was built upon a Roman palace indicates that this may have been the case. This possibility also raises questions about those who commissioned or carried out the building process. A contemporary audience, or one who would have been familiar with the incorporation of Roman remains *post factum*, may have been targeted specifically by the patron. The heterogeneous meanings implied by the re-use of Roman stonework may have catered to a particular audience, and allows us to see that re-use was a complex process of architectural intent and audience response.

The meaning of re-use may have even changed over time, as different audiences responded to the transmission of knowledge about re-use, or this knowledge may have fallen out of circulation and lost some of its inherent authority. Evidence from the case studies implies that the 'act' of re-use is an inherent part of its significance. If Roman material is plastered or covered in some way, then it follows that meanings derived from the conspicuous display of Roman *spolia* can be re-evaluated. While I would argue that this alters the reception of Roman re-use, it does not detract from the performance of the initial re-use process. Nor does it detract from potential meaning carried by other methods in the time following its construction. This idea breaks down the distinction between agent and audience when considering re-use, and posits the idea that removing the tangible audience and visual display does not make the re-use of Roman material culture less significant.

6.11 Conclusion

Many of the buildings at the case-study sites examined in this thesis, particularly parish churches, featured the extensive re-use of Roman masonry from as early as the late-Saxon period. The emulation of decoration such as polychromy and herringbone, along with continuous site

occupation, was also common in Anglo-Saxon England. The arrival of the Normans following the Conquest of 1066 ensured the continuation of these practices, as the Anglo-Norman elite attempted to assimilate with pre-Conquest architectural traditions. However, the advent of the Anglo-Normans also brought significant change, primarily relating to the monumentality of their buildings and the development of the English Romanesque style. Massive architectural structures, both secular and religious, constructed out of unprecedented amounts of Roman building material, began to dominate the urban landscapes of St Albans, Chester and Colchester. While the Anglo-Norman elite integrated with Anglo-Saxon cultural traditions, they also sought to simultaneously surpass it, and this is reflected particularly in re-use at the castles and monasteries at the case-study sites. Reference to Rome and the re-use of its material culture suited Norman ideas of rulership, as Roman imperial traditions paralleled the Norman perception of their own right to govern. Decoration, building techniques, topography and Roman material of the Anglo-Saxon period continued to be used and emulated, however, references to these practices in literature also highlights their increasing importance in the Anglo-Norman consciousness.

With the arrival of the Normans, accounts which related to Roman Britain became the means to translate new ideas about re-use in creative and innovative ways. Over the course of the twelfth century, this began to reflect twelfth-century cultural developments, and also the renewed interest in the creation of monastic histories as a reaction to challenges precipitated by the Conquest. The production of local references to early-Christian or Anglo-Saxon saints, as well as Roman historical figures and Roman re-use, edified monastic communities and reassured the native populace that the Normans had an ordained and historical claim to authority, both in the cloister and the court. Some texts, such as Lucian's *De Laude Cestrie* and Matthew Paris' *Gesta Abbatum* had a seemingly spiritual focus, but were designed to assert the specific primacy of abbeys and towns through association with the Roman church and the early development of Christianity.

Hagiographical texts relating to St Alban, produced by a long tradition of monks at the abbey, and to St Helen, in the *Annals* of St John's of Colchester, became widely disseminated across the country. Benedictine institutions which perpetuated and popularised the re-use of Roman material culture implemented a variety of nuanced historical agendas in their texts. This was in contrast to the Augustinian foundations of the case studies, which generally confined re-use to the physical expressions of re-use also seen at Benedictine monastic sites. However despite being primarily monastic productions, the texts of the case studies often reinforced the agendas of royalty and the secular elite, as can be seen with the patronage of the steward of Colchester Castle and the Anglo-Norman earls of Chester. All of the texts in the case studies assert the primacy of

Norman institutions at a local, urban or monastic level, which in some cases, supported Norman *auctoritas* on a much wider scale.

Re-use was often related to practical concerns, such as proximity and availability of convenient sources of building material or foundations. However, this thesis has shown that sites, buildings and portable remains retain their importance through continuous use and medieval speculation about their past. Existing scholarship on re-use is often reluctant to ascribe acts of conscious and meaningful re-use beyond a practical rationale, and also assumes that the motivations for re-use can be universally understood. These perceptions can, and should, be revised by the understanding of the processes of re-use provided by the case studies. This is considerably informed by contemporaneous literature which engages with Roman material culture, creating an argument for a wholly interdisciplinary approach to re-use. This thesis builds upon scholarship of the literary appropriations of Roman rhetoric, and offers a material perspective for textual criticism of the middle ages. The project also provides a critique and an alternative to previous studies which prioritise Rome as the source of meaningfully appropriated *spolia*, and presents a new model of evaluating re-use. This is based upon the highly deliberate re-use of local remains, which conveys a sense of a particular Romano-British past in addition to the legacy of the Holy City.

Deliberate displays of Roman building material and decoration would have eventually filtered down to all of those who used urban spaces in the twelfth-century, as the reconstruction of parish churches in the twelfth-century followed the initial building phase of higher-status Norman buildings. This re-use may have either been part of an earlier custom, or may have copied Roman decoration and re-use from monasteries and castles as part of a tradition of aspiration. Topography, throughout all periods in the case studies, retained its importance, as the physical legacy of the Roman landscape was used to convey meaning in later monastic, parochial and secular buildings. This thesis has demonstrated that the re-use of Roman masonry often went seemingly unnoticed, covered by plaster or hidden in foundational cavities. In reality this was a transmission of privileged knowledge about the Roman past, which enforced Norman political or cultural supremacy and subverted traditional notions of visual display. The case studies show that complementary and sometimes conflicting local processes took advantage of the multivalent nature of Roman material culture.

This thesis has demonstrated the importance of physical remains to Norman political and cultural traditions, and brought to light a complex and nuanced understanding of Roman re-use in twelfth-century England. This model could be used to investigate other English cities following the Conquest which had once been Roman settlements, such as Rochester, Gloucester, Winchester, London, York and Carlisle. The thesis also provides a theoretical approach to re-use, which

incorporates levels of intent and meaning in addition to a recursive process of memorialisation conducted by both agent and audience. This could be applied to any instance of re-use, from Classical re-appropriation in the arch of Constantine, to modern projects which remediate text-based formats for digital applications. Most importantly, the thesis has clearly demonstrated that an understanding of re-use is best informed by multiple disciplines, and that literary analyses can be effectively combined with archaeological evidence when considering the legacy of Roman Britain at St Albans, Chester and Colchester.

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