

Rycote Chapel Coffins in the Crypt

**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



January 2008

**Client: Rycote Buildings
Charitable Foundation**

Issue N^o: 1
OA Job N^o: 3777
NGR: SP 667 046

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Client Name: Rycote Buildings Charitable Foundation

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Rycote Chapel- Coffins in the Crypt
Thame
Oxfordshire

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SP 667 046

Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 3777
Site Code: RYCOTE04
Invoice Code: RYCOTBUR
Receiving Museum: Museum of Oxford
Museum Accession No: OXCMS:2002.52

Prepared by: Ceridwen Boston
Position: Assistant Head of Heritage Burial Services
Date: 6th January 2008

Checked by: Dr Louise Loe
Position: Head of Heritage Burial Services
Date: 12th January 2008

Approved by: Dr Louise Loe Signed.....
Position: Head of Heritage Burial Services
Date: 13th January 2008

Document File Location projects on server 1
Graphics File Location
Illustrated by Laura Kirby, Julia Moxham, Amy Hemingway

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Oxford Archaeology

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

f: (0044) 01865 793496

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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**Rycote Chapel
Rycote Park
Thame
Oxfordshire**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In March 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological recording action in the crypt of Rycote Chapel, Rycote Park, near Thame, Oxfordshire. The work was commissioned by the present owner, Bernard Taylor, on behalf of the Rycote Buildings Charitable Foundation. The action included the recording of 24 coffins of the Bertie Family, the Earls of Abingdon and Barons Norreys of Rycote. The coffins dated from 1649 to 1884, and were remarkable for their ornate upholstery and coffin fittings. One anthropoid lead coffin of the infant brother of the first Earl (1649) was very unusual. The identities of members of the family interred within each coffin were known in all but four cases. From incomplete inscriptions and historical records, three out of these four were tentatively identified, leaving only one unknown. The burials included six generations of the Bertie family, the last interment being Montague the 6th Earl in 1884.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological recording action within the crypt of Rycote Chapel, the private family vault of the Earls of Abingdon and Barons Norreys of Rycote, at Rycote Park, near Thame, Oxfordshire. The works involved recording 24 coffins of the Norreys/ Bertie family. The work was commissioned by Bernard Taylor, on behalf of the Rycote Buildings Charitable Foundation.

1.1.2 Rycote Chapel is a Grade I listed building and is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

1.1.3 Rycote Chapel stands within Rycote Park, an estate of approximately 92 hectares, located within the historic parishes of Great Haseley and Albury (centred at NGR SP 667 046), south- east of Thame, Oxfordshire (Figs 1 and 2).

1.1.4 The Chapel stands in the grounds to the south of Rycote House (a Grade II listed building)- all that remains of the original Tudor stately home that was severely damaged by a fire in 1745, and was subsequently demolished in 1807. The grounds in which the chapel stands are landscaped (most recently by Capability Brown) and pasture (the deer park) lies to the south.

1.2 Archaeological and historical background

1.2.1 The archaeological background to Rycote Park was described in an OA desk-based assessment by Beamish (2003). Buildings recording of Rycote House was undertaken by Naranjo-Santana of OA (in progress). Elizabeth Bankes Associates undertook a Historic Park Restoration Plan in 2003. These reports provide a more general background to the Park in which Rycote Chapel stands. The historical background to the chapel and to the Bertie family interred within the crypt is outlined below. Those

individuals whose coffins were identified during the coffin recording action by OA in 2004 are represented in bold print below. A family tree of the Earls of Abingdon is shown as Fig. 4, with the names of the individuals interred within the crypt highlighted in red.

- 1.2.2 Rycote Chapel was commissioned by Richard Quartermayne Lord of the Manor, Member of Parliament and Sheriff of Oxfordshire, and his wife, Sybil Engerfield, as a chantry with three priests. It was built to replace a smaller monastic building (dating to the reign of King Stephen) that had fallen into disrepair (Morris 1978). Rycote Chapel was an ambitious size for a private chapel, nearly sixty feet in length with a western tower rising to a height of nearly fifty feet (*ibid.*). The building comprised a continuous nave and chancel with a wagon roof (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974). The chapel was dedicated to St Michael and All the Angels, and consecrated in 1449. Rycote Chapel served as the private place of worship of the owners of Rycote, in sequence the Quartermaynes, the Herons, Williams, Norreys (Barons of Rycote) and Bertie family (the Earls of Abingdon) until the 18th century. Rycote Chapel is unusual in being built all in a piece, and hence, represents one of the few medieval churches still with its original structure.
- 1.2.3 Richard Quartermayne and later, his widow Sybil, held Rycote until 1483. The Quartermaynes were not buried within the chapel at Rycote, but were interred within a splendid tomb (complete with brasses depicting Sir Richard, Sybil and her heir, Sir Richard Fowler) in the south transept of Thame parish church. Sybil was succeeded by her grand- nephew, Sir Richard Fowler, who appeared somewhat less successful in managing the estate and in 1521, the Rycote Estate was sold to Sir John Heron (Morris 1978). Heron demolished the existing house and constructed the Great House to the north of Rycote Chapel in the 1520s or 1530s. This imposing brick building was surrounded by ornamental gardens and a lake, and later enclosed by a deer park (now Rycote Park). Sir John's son, Giles, sold the estate to Sir John Williams in 1542, shortly before he was executed for treason under Henry VIII. Williams was a man of national repute and held a series of high offices. He entertained Henry VIII at Rycote on his honeymoon tour with his fifth wife, Catherine Howard. Sir John continued to hold high office in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I, and was made one of the two guardians of the Princess Elizabeth, when she was banished to semi-confinement of Woodstock Palace in the reign of Mary I. Elizabeth became a life-long friend of his daughter Margery and frequently visited Rycote Park during her confinement and later during her reign as Elizabeth I. A special domed pew were constructed in the chapel for the princess' use at that time. The elaborate tomb of Sir John Williams lies within Thame parish church, but that of his first wife, Elizabeth, lies within the sanctuary of Rycote Chapel.
- 1.2.4 Margery Williams became mistress of Rycote House and married Henry Norreys of Wytham, Oxon. From their union descended the Norreys of Rycote. Henry played an active role at court and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in the Great Hall at Rycote. He was her Ambassador to France, and the title of Baron Norreys of Rycote was conferred on him for his services. Sir Henry and his wife were interred beneath the sanctuary within Rycote Chapel.

- 1.2.5 The six sons of Henry and Margery served in Elizabeth's armies (several as generals) in the Netherlands, Ireland and Portugal, and in whose service five were killed. Lord Henry, Lady Margery and their sons are commemorated in the Norreys Monument in Westminster Abbey. The estate passed to their sole surviving son, Sir Edward. In 1603, his nephew Francis inherited the Park. He added the musicians' gallery to the family pew in the chapel, and built the west gallery. He was a turbulent character, reputedly a drunkard, prone to brawling, and on one occasion was arrested for manslaughter. Brawling in the House of Lords in the presence of King James I resulted in him being thrown into the Fleet Prison. After his release in 1622 he returned to Rycote where he reputedly committed suicide with a crossbow. He was buried secretly, without a coffin, in an unmarked grave just north of the door of Rycote Chapel (Morris 1978).
- 1.2.6 Francis died without a male heir and was succeeded to the title by his daughter, Elizabeth the 3rd Baroness of Rycote. She and her husband Edward Wray Groom of the Bedchamber to James I, were loyal to Charles I and entertained him on several occasions at Rycote. During an outbreak of plague in London in 1625, Charles moved his court to Rycote, demonstrating the great status of that estate (Elizabeth Banks Associates 2003). The chapel at Rycote was greatly embellished during this period. It was described by Sherwood and Pevsner (1974, 747) as '*memorable for its sumptuous 17th century fittings... domed, painted and canopied, they have the brittle and insubstantial air of pageant scenery....*'.
- 1.2.7 Elizabeth the 3rd Baroness died at Rycote in 1645 and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The title passed to her daughter Bridget (4th Baroness), who married first, Edward Sackville, and second, Montagu Bertie, 2nd Earl of Lindsey, a Captain of the Guards, Groom of the Bedchamber to Charles I, and Knight of the Garter. Montagu Bertie was a staunch Royalist who fought for the King at Edgehill and other major battles, and after the execution of Charles I was one of four nobles to accompany the King's corpse to Windsor. After the Civil War, Montagu lived quietly at Rycote. With the restoration of Charles II, he was appointed Privy Councillor and Lord Great Chamberlain of England. He and Bridget had four children, one of whom was **James** (the eldest son and heir), and another was an **unnamed infant**, who died in 1649. These two were interred within the vault of Rycote Chapel in coffins 69 and 75, respectively. A commemorative bust of James, the 5th Baron (erected in 1767) adorns a niche within the chapel (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974).
- 1.2.8 The Right Honourable **James Bertie** became the 5th Baron Norreys in his mother's right in 1675, and was made the 1st Earl of Abingdon in 1681. He held office as Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire from 1689- 1697. James married, first, **Eleanora** Lee (by whom he had ten, possibly 11 children) and, second, Katherine Viscountess Wenham (by whom he had none). **Eleanora** was the eldest daughter of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, Oxon., and married James in Adderbury parish church in February 1672. **Eleanora** died in childbirth on 31/5/1691 at Lavington, Wiltshire, where she was buried. Her coffin was later removed to Rycote Chapel vault where she reputedly was laid to rest next to her husband (Morris 1978). **James** died on the 22nd of May 1699,

aged 46 years. He was interred within the crypt of Rycote Chapel (coffin 69). No breastplate or other memorial inscription to **Eleanora** was recovered from within the vault of Rycote Chapel, but unnamed coffin 68 adjacent to the coffin of James the 1st Earl is probably hers. **James**'s second wife, Catherine, survived him by several years, and her coffin was not recovered within the crypt. Presumably she was buried elsewhere.

- 1.2.9 **Eleanora** and **James** had at least ten offspring: **Montagu** (coffin 59), James, Henry, **Robert** (coffin 74), Peregrine, Charles, Bridget, Anne, Mary and an **unnamed infant son** (coffin 74). **Eleanora** died in childbirth six to seven years after the death of this infant, presumably in labour with her 11th child. **Montagu**, the third child, was born in 1672, and became the 2nd Earl of Abingdon and 6th Baron Norreys of Rycote in 1699. He was Constable of the Tower of London, and later held office as Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire in 1702- 1705 and again in 1715, and as Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire from 1701- 1702. He died in 1743, aged 71 years, and was interred within coffin 59 within the crypt of Rycote Chapel.
- 1.2.10 **Montagu** the 2nd Earl married, first, **Anne** Baroness of Kinderton, the direct descendant of Gisbert Venables, one of the seven Barons of Palatinate of Chester under William the Conqueror, and, second, Mary Churchill. On his first marriage Montagu changed the family name to Bertie-Venables. **Anne** (b. 7/5/1674; d. 28/4/1715) was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Anne, and if the lengthy commemoration to her is accurate, was a valued and trusted friend to the queen. She drew the line, however, at divorcing or separating from her husband on Her Majesty's orders, after which she retired from Court for some years, until the offence was overlooked, and she was restored to her earlier position. Queen Anne is reputed to have enjoyed the favours of a number of her Ladies-in-Waiting (Pickering and Bryant 1998), of whom Sarah Churchill the Duchess of Marlborough was the most famous. **Anne** Countess of Abingdon may well have been another such lover. **Montagu** and **Anne** had only one son, **James**, who died in infancy, aged 14 weeks and six days. He was interred within Rycote Chapel crypt within coffin 67, the coffin placed on the lid of the coffin of his grandfather. **Anne** died on the 28/4/1715, aged 41 years, and was interred in the crypt of Rycote Chapel (coffin 58) alongside her husband.
- 1.2.11 Two other offspring of **James** and **Eleanora** were recovered from the crypt of Rycote Chapel. These were **Robert**, their fourth child (born 28/2/1676; died 6/8/1710, aged 36 years) interred within coffin 74, and their **seventh son** and tenth child interred within coffin 74. This infant appeared to have been stillborn or died at birth on the 5th of January 1684 or 5 (inscription unclear). The infant was not named.
- 1.2.12 The line passed to Montagu's nephew, **Willoughby**, the son of James (second son of James the 1st Earl) and Elizabeth Willoughby. **Willoughby** (b. 28/11/1692, d. 10/6/1760, aged 67 years) succeeded **Montagu** to become the 3rd Earl of Abingdon and Lord Norreys in 1743. Willoughby was born in 1693, and died on the 9th of June 1760, aged 67 years. He married **Anna Maria** or Marion Collins, the daughter of Sir John Collins. They had ten offspring: **James** (b. 1735, d. 13/11/1745), Elizabeth (b.

1728), **Willoughby** (b. 1733), Jane (b. 1730, d. 19/4/1809), Anne Eleanora (b. 1737, d. 19/4/1809), **Sophia** (b. 1748, d. 12/10/1760), **Bridget** (b. 1732, d. 9/12/1760), Peregrine (b. 13/5/1741, d. 8/1790), Mary (b. 1746, d. 22/7/1826), Anne (b. 1750) and an unnamed child. Jane, Mary and Anne Eleanora married and were not buried at Rycote. Peregrine (b. 13/5/1741; d. 1790) became a naval captain. The eldest son, **James**, was killed in the great fire that destroyed Rycote House in 1745. He was ten years old. He was interred within the crypt of Rycote Chapel within coffin 50. The fire almost completely destroyed Rycote House, and the family retired to their estate at Wytham, Oxfordshire. (Morris 1978). In spite of this change of residence, the Bertie family continued to inter their members within the crypt at Rycote. Unmarried daughters **Sophia** (b. 1748; died 12/10/1760, aged 12 years) and **Bridget** (b. 1733; died 9/12/1760, aged 27 years) were interred here within coffins 51 and 70, respectively. **Willoughby** the 3rd Earl and his wife **Anna Maria** (d. 21/12/1763, aged 54 years) were laid to rest within the crypt in coffins 60 and 64, respectively. Interestingly, these coffins did not lie alongside one another, but were separated by coffin (63), the coffin of **Harriet Cage** (third daughter of the late Hon. General Thomas Cage). Her relationship with the Bertie family, and the 3rd Earl and Countess is unclear.

1.2.13 **Willoughby** the 3rd Earl was succeeded by his second son, **Willoughby** the 4th Earl (b. 1733; d. 26/9/1799, aged 60 years). The 4th Earl was a musical patron and composer and political writer. His brother-in-law Giovanni Gallini (married to his sister Jane) brought him in contact with J.C. Bach and Karl Frederick Abel, whose careers he greatly encouraged. He was a friend of Haydn. **Willoughby** the 4th Earl married **Charlotte Anne Emily** Warren, daughter of Admiral Peter Warren. They had five offspring: **Charlotte Anne Emily** (b. 1769; d. 11/1/1799, aged 30 years), **Montague** (b. 30/4/1784, d. 16/10/1854, aged 70 years), Willoughby (b. 8/2/1779, d. 20/2/1779, aged 12 days), Willoughby (b. 1781, d. 1781) and Frederic (b. 12/2/1793, d. 4/2/1868, aged 74 years). Willoughby the 4th Earl and his Countess were interred within the crypt within adjacent coffins 72 and 71. Their daughter, **Charlotte Anne Emily**, lay within coffin 65, and their son **Montague** the 5th Earl within coffin 57. Their second surviving son, the Honourable Reverent Frederic and his wife Georgina do not appear to have been interred within the crypt, but their daughter **Charlotte Anne Emily** (b. 1826, d. 19/12/1839, aged 13 years) was laid to rest here within coffin 54.

1.2.14 **Montague** the 5th Earl held office as Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire between 1826 and 1854. He married twice, firstly, **Emily** Gage, daughter of the Hon. Thomas Gage and Margaret Kemble, and secondly, Frederica Augusta Kerr (by whom he had no issue). **Montague** and **Emily** had a least nine offspring: **Montague** (b. 19/6/1808, d. 8/2/1884, aged 76 years), Charlotte, Emily Caroline, **Albermarle** (b. 1812, died 4/12/1825, aged 14 years), Henry William, **Augusta Georgiana** (d. 4/5/1815, aged 3 weeks), **Vere Peregrine** (d. 1818, infant), **Georgina Elizabeth** (b. 1825, d. 1838, aged 13 years) and Brownland Charles (d. at sea, 1852). The eldest son, **Montague** became 6th Earl of Abingdon. Emily Caroline married, but Charlotte did not. Those offspring who died in infancy or childhood were interred within the crypt. Breastplate

inscriptions identified the coffins of **Augusta Georgiana** (coffin 61) and **Albermarle** (coffin 52). The inscription on coffin 62 was only partly legible, with only part of the name of the deceased appearing as possibly 'Percy'. The date of death was recorded as 23/11/181--. This infant coffin was probably that of **Vere Peregrine**, who died in 1818. The deceased named on the breastplate inscription of coffin 55 read 'G-----', with the year of death of 1838. This is probably the coffin of **Georgina Elizabeth**.

- 1.2.15 **Montague** the 5th Earl died on the 16/10/1854, aged 70 years, and was interred within Rycote Chapel crypt within coffin 57. His Countess **Emily** predeceased him, dying on the 28th of August 1838, aged 62 years. She was laid alongside her husband within coffin 56. There is no evidence for the interment of his second wife, Frederica.
- 1.2.16 The fifth earl was succeeded by his eldest son, **Montague** in 1854. The 6th Earl served as Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire from 1854 to 1881, and was an active politician, becoming Member of Parliament for Oxfordshire in 1830-31 and from 1832 to 1852, and Member of Parliament for Abingdon from 1852 to 1854. He married Elizabeth, the only daughter of fellow MP, George Granville Harcourt, by which he had nine children. **Montague** was the last individual to be interred within the crypt of Rycote Chapel. He died 8/2/1884, aged 76 years, and was laid to rest within coffin 53. The coffin was the last to be interred within the crypt and lay just within the entrance at the foot of the stairs. His Countess, Elizabeth, died at Wytham Abbey on 16/10/1858. There was no evidence that she was also interred here.
- 1.2.17 Of the 24 individuals interred within the crypt of Rycote Chapel, only one (adult-sized coffin 66) could not be identified. Coffin 66 lay alongside coffin 65 (Charlotte Anne Emily, daughter of Willoughby the 4th Earl), and coffin 73 (Robert, son of the 1st Earl) towards the rear of the crypt. This location tentatively suggests an earlier coffin. Contenders may be the offspring of the 1st Earl; Charlotte the unmarried daughter of the 5th Earl; and Elizabeth the 6th Countess.
- 1.2.18 Willoughby (first son of that name of the 4th Earl), who died as an infant in 1779, is thought to have been interred within the vault (Morris 1978) but no coffin for this infant was recovered during the recording action.
- 1.2.19 A summary of the individuals interred within each coffin is summarised in Table 1.

1.3 Acknowledgements

- 1.3.1 On- site coffin recording was undertaken by Annsofie Witkin, Laura Kirby and Jim Mumford of OA. The report was compiled by Ceridwen Boston. Graphics were undertaken by Laura Kirby, Georgina Slater and Amy Hemingway. The project was managed by Angela Boyle and Louise Loe of Heritage Burial Services of OA.
- 1.3.2 We are indebted to the landowner Bernard Taylor, who commissioned the work on behalf of the Rycote Buildings Charitable Foundation, and who made it possible to record the very important coffins of the Bertie family.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- To identify and record the condition, date and character of 24 coffins of the Bertie family interred within the crypt.
- To record the ornate coffin fittings decorating the 24 coffins and to compare them with the growing corpus of coffin fittings from other sites of this period.
- To identify individuals of the Bertie family who were interred within the crypt.
- To record the spatial distribution of the coffins within the crypt so that their original position is known.
- To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The location of each coffin within the crypt was planned at a scale of 1:50 (Fig. 3). Each coffins as well as details of more unusual or interesting coffin fittings were digitally photographed. A general photographic record of the work was made.

2.2.2 Each coffin was assigned an unique context number. The condition, coffin type, shape, dimensions and coffin fittings were recorded on *pro forma* post-medieval coffin recording sheets. All inscriptions on breastplates and commemorative plaques were recorded verbatim.

2.2.3 The style or type of each coffin fitting was compared to styles recorded in the catalogue compiled at Christ Church Spitalfields, London (Reeve and Adams 1998), the type site for post-medieval church burial. In this report, in summary tables and in the text, styles matching the Spitalfield's taxonomy are abbreviated to CCS. Although extensive, the Spitalfield's catalogue is not all- encompassing, and a range of previously unrecognised styles and dates have been recorded at post-medieval burials sites in Britain excavated by Oxford Archaeology (OA). Heritage Burial Services of OA are currently compiling a more extensive catalogue based on these new coffin fitting types. As with the Spitalfield's catalogue, coffin fitting types in Rycote Chapel crypt were also compared to the OA catalogue. Where no matches were found, the new types from Rycote were sketched in the field, and have been reproduced in Plates 1- 34 in Appendix 6 of this report. They are not to scale. The above methodology is discussed more fully in Section 4.3.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of the coffins within the crypt

3.1.1 The crypt of Rycote chapel is located beneath the chancel, and measures 6.35 m x 4.5 m. A small entrance leading to a short flight of steps is present centrally in the western wall.

- 3.1.2 Twenty-four coffins of six generations of the Bertie family evenly covered the floor space of the crypt (Fig. 3). Most coffins were orientated west- east (with the head to the west) but a row of four (coffins 54, 55, 56 and 57) was orientated south- north. The only coffins to be stacked one above another were three infant coffins (61, 62 and 67). Coffin 67 lay on the lid of adult coffin 68, and coffins 61 and 62 overlay adult coffin 60. The earliest interment, anthropoid coffin 75, lay in the south- eastern corner of the crypt. Next to it lay the small coffin of the unnamed infant son of James 1st Earl of Abingdon (coffin 74). The adult brother of this infant, Robert, lay alongside him (coffin 73). To the north of Robert, the eastern- most row of coffins included Willoughby the 4th Earl (coffin 72), his wife Charlotte (coffin 71), his sister Bridget (coffin 70), James the 1st Earl (coffin 68), and an unnamed coffin probably of Eleanora his wife (coffin 69). Overlying this coffin was the infant coffin of James, the only son of Montagu the 2nd Earl.
- 3.1.3 In the second north- south row of coffins (from south to north) were unnamed coffin 66, Charlotte Anne Emily daughter of Willoughby the 4th Earl (coffin 65), Anne Maria 3rd Countess (coffin 64), Harriet Cage (coffin 63), Willoughby the 3rd Earl (coffin 60), his uncle Montagu the 2nd Earl (coffin 59), and alongside him, Montagu's wife Anne (coffin 58). The infant coffins of Georgiana Augusta and Vere Peregrine (coffins 61 and 62) had been placed on the coffin of their great-grandfather Willoughby the 3rd Earl.
- 3.1.4 The westernmost third of the crypt contained four parallel coffins orientated north-south and four orientated east- west. The former group (from west to east) were Montague the 5th Earl (coffin 57), his wife Emily (coffin 56), probably Georgiana Elizabeth daughter of the 5th Earl and Countess (coffin 55), and her cousin Charlotte Anne Emily, the daughter of the Hon. Rev. Frederic and his wife Lady Georgina (coffin 54). The north-south group comprised (from south to north), Montague the 6th Earl (coffin 53), his brother Albermarle (coffin 52), his great-aunt Sophia daughter of Willoughby the 3rd Earl (coffin 51), and James, eldest son of that earl (coffin 50).
- 3.1.5 Chronological progression in any one direction was not clearly evident in the spatial layout of the coffins within the crypt. It would seem, however, that the earliest burials were placed in the eastern corners of the crypt away from the entrance. After this phase, coffins were lined against the northern wall, the latest being the coffins of James (coffin 50) and Sophia (coffin 51), the young offspring of the 3rd Earl, located in the north- western corner of the crypt. After this phase, the central area was filled, from the western wall, firstly by the coffins of the 4th Earl and Countess (71 and 72, resp.) and the earl's sister, Bridget (coffin 70). The central area of the crypt was occupied by coffins of the 3rd Earl (coffin 60), his wife Anna Maria (coffin 64) and the unidentified Harriet Cage (coffin 64). It would appear that the 3rd Earl and Countess's coffins were separated to make room for later coffins 71, 72 and 64.
- 3.1.6 Later interments of the 5th Earl (coffin 57) and Countess (coffin 56) and two of their adolescent offspring, Albermarle (coffin 52) and Augusta Georgiana (coffin 55), lay just within the entrance to the crypt. The very last interment, Montague the 6th Earl (coffin 53), was located in the last remaining space immediately in front of the

entrance. This spatial progression in use of the crypt over time suggests that the only coffins experiencing significant disturbance were the infant coffins 61, 62 and 67, whose placement on top of two adult coffins display little association with them either in terms of time or familial relationship. It is quite probable that these little coffins were moved from their original resting place in a minor 'tidy up' operation at some point in the past, possibly to make space for later interments. The coffins of the 3rd Earl and Countess also appeared to have been shifted apart in order to accommodate later interments.

4 COFFINS AND COFFIN FITTINGS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The 24 coffins within the crypt of Rycote Chapel were remarkable for their ornateness, and for the uniqueness of their metal coffin fittings designs. The ornateness of the coffins was in keeping with the Bertie family's rank as Peers of the Realm, and displayed many features typical of the coffins of the affluent of this period.

4.1.2 The earliest coffin was anthropoid infant coffin 75, dated 1649. Four other coffins (67, 68, 69 and 74) dated to the very end of the 17th century, whilst later coffin 57 dated to the mid- Victorian period (1854) and the last coffin to be interred (coffin 53), dated to 1884. All the remaining 17 coffins dated to the 18th and early 19th centuries, a period when lavish investment in funerary regalia and ceremony was reflective of, and paramount to, one's position in society.

4.1.3 Changing fashions in funerary regalia over the 135 years of interment within the crypt were clearly reflected in the coffins from Rycote Chapel, and are discussed in detail below.

4.2 The coffins

Background to post-medieval coffins

4.2.1 In the medieval period, the majority of burials were uncoffined, but from the sixteenth and particularly the 17th century it became customary to inter all but the most indigent in a coffin. Coffins of this period were generally plain, rectangular or trapezoid wooden boxes. A gabled lid became popular over this period, but otherwise decoration on the outer surface of the coffin was lacking. More elaborate coffins became the norm from the late 17th century onwards, when it became customary to cover the coffin with upholstery of baize or velvet, and to decorate the lid and side panels with studs and metal coffin fittings.

4.2.2 By 1700- 1720 the funeral furnishing trade was a firmly established business, providing coffins for all classes of people and at various costs, depending on the status and wealth of the deceased (Litten 1991). The financial investment in funerary panoply grew over the course of the 18th century, reaching its zenith in the 1840s. Even amongst the poor, the importance of providing a decent burial was keenly felt

(May 2000). However, for those that could afford it, the coffin itself was just one aspect of the elaborate mourning and funerary practices surrounding the death of a loved one in this period. Funerals of the wealthy frequently involved processions of black draped hearses, black plumed horses, mutes and chief mourners, a complex symbolism surrounding appropriate mourning dress, grand memorials and, of course, the heavily decorated coffin itself (May 1996). Amongst the wealthy, funerals became a powerful vehicle for social display (Richmond 1999). The richness of the coffins at Rycote clearly illustrated the high rank and social standing of the Bertie family at this time.

- 4.2.3 After the 1840s, public sentiment concerning funerals changed again. Increasingly, effusive displays of mourning were seen as excessive and undesirable, and elaborate, expensive funerals began to be regarded as vulgar and ostentatious displays, and were increasingly considered to be in poor taste (Rugg 1999). In this period, many caricatures stigmatised undertakers as avarice vultures, preying on the vulnerability of families in grief, exploiting other people's misfortune and their desire to be seen to give their dead a 'good send off'. Over the middle and later Victorian period, a taste for simpler funerals became the norm, and persists with us today. Interestingly, in the further reaches of the old British Empire elements of the earlier burial traditions persist. Coffin fittings very much in the elaborate early Victorian mode were being manufactured in Birmingham and shipped to the Caribbean (particularly to Jamaica) as late as the 1960s. The majority of the coffins in Rycote Chapel crypt dated to the heyday of the late Georgian/Victorian funerary tradition at its most extravagant.

Coffin 75- the anthropoid coffin

- 4.2.4 Infant coffin 75 was the earliest coffin in the crypt, dating to 1649 (Fig. 34, Plates 38 and 39). It was very different in construction to the rest of the coffins, which were of the flat lidded, single break type still used today. Coffin 75 comprised two layers of lead, the outer being constructed of lead sheets (now badly corroded), and the inner layer comprising an upper and lower lead sheet, the upper being shaped into an anthropoid form. In common with most anthropoid coffins, this inner layer appeared to have been constructed of two parts: a lead tray onto which the body was placed, and the upper or anterior sheet of lead, which was laid over the corpse, moulded to the underlying shape, and soldered to the tray. The solder line was visible (Plate 34).
- 4.2.5 The inner shell was unusual in that the facial features (including eyes, nose, mouth and hairline), arms (meeting at the groin), umbilicus, legs, knees and feet were clearly depicted on the obverse surface (Plate 34, 38 and 39). The hands were not shown. Such detail has been found on adult anthropoid coffins but appears less commonly in the coffins of infants (Litten 1991, 94). Anthropoid lead coffins were almost exclusively associated with the burial vault, and are thought to have been an early attempt to contain body fluids of the decaying corpse. To assist this process, the corpse was first eviscerated and wrapped in a number of layers of cerecloth, the outer layer being sewn (*ibid.*), before being placed within the lead shell.

- 4.2.6 Anthropoid coffins are known in England from the fifteenth century, one of the earliest examples being that of Elizabeth of York (d. 1503) (*ibid.*). Her husband, Henry VII (d. 1509) and James I (d. 1625) were all encased in such coffins and laid to rest within Henry VII's vault in Westminster Abbey. Infant anthropoid coffins are also known from the Sackville and De La Warr vaults at Withyham, Sussex, although these date slightly earlier in 17th century. Unlike the Rycote coffin 75, none displayed facial features or other anatomical detail.
- 4.2.7 Anthropoid coffins increased in popularity over the 16th century but by the 1760s and 1770s, their popularity was waning. Thus, coffin 75 dated to the latter part of this period, not long before anthropoid coffins went out of use.

Coffin shape

- 4.2.8 With the exception of coffin 75, all the coffins in Rycote Chapel crypt were of the single break type (i.e. were shouldered with a flat lid). This type replaced the earlier trapezoid gabled coffins and the less common anthropoid coffins of the earlier 17th century, becoming increasingly popular from the 1660s onwards and was ubiquitous by the 1730s (Litten 1991). The single break coffins of James and Eleanora, the 1st Earl and Countess (dated 1699 and 1691, respectively) indicated that the surviving Berties were not behind in adopting this new trend in funerary fashion. All later coffins within the crypt were of this shape.

Coffin construction

- 4.2.9 During the Georgian/Victorian period, coffins varied considerably in construction and material, ranging from the most simple unadorned wooden coffins of pauper funerals, to triple layered affairs of the wealthy, heavily adorned with velvet and encrusted with elaborate metal fittings. The most inexpensive coffins were simple construction of a single layer of wooden planks, nailed together with iron nails at the corners and along the coffin length. More elaborate wooden coffin constructions were double layered, or had a double lid (Litten 1991). The most expensive coffins possessed a lead shell. Such coffins are most commonly used for interments in crypts and within intra- and extra-mural vaults and brick-lined shaft graves. The lead of these coffins or shells served to slow, and sometimes arrest the decay of the corpse. The Georgian/Victorian religious belief in the importance of the integrity of the physical body on the Day of Judgement underlay some of the motivations to halt the natural corruption of the corpse. It also fed into the gentle, romantic metaphor of death as eternal rest, de-emphasising and sometimes denying the processes of physical decay that had so pre-occupied people of the later medieval and earlier post-medieval periods (Tarlow 1998; Rugg 1999). On a practical level, the containment of body liquor within a water- and air-proof container was of particular importance when interring individuals within the church vaults or beneath the floor of the church itself, and would explain why all coffins within the crypt of Rycote Chapel were lead lined.
- 4.2.10 Lead-lined coffins were either double or triple layered. Double-layered coffins were composed of a lead shell either enclosed by, or enclosing a wooden coffin. Triple

coffins comprised a wooden inner coffin encased by a lead shell, the lead in turn being enclosed within an ornately decorated and upholstered outer wooden case.

- 4.2.11 Triple coffins represented a considerable investment in time, materials and money and, as such, indicate the wealth and social prominence of the deceased and his/her surviving family. The inner wooden coffin was usually constructed of elm, being particularly favoured for being more impermeable to water than many other available woods. Planed elm planks were glued and screwed together, and the seams caulked with Swedish pitch. The interior of the coffin was usually lined with fabric (most commonly cambric, a fine linen originally from Cambray, Flanders) (Litten 1991). Often a decorative frill of punched 'lace' covered the coffin sides. This was aesthetically most important where the corpse was viewed prior to burial. Traditionally, the body of the deceased was laid out within the open coffin to be viewed by those wishing to pay their last respects. In prominent families, like the Berties, large numbers of peers, dependents and retainers would file past the corpse. It was thus deemed very important that the deceased be aesthetically draped, as thought in bed asleep (May 2000).
- 4.2.12 Traditionally, the base of the inner coffin was covered with a shallow calico-covered layer of sawdust or bran, which helped to absorb some of the body fluids released during early putrefaction. As an alternative to this sawdust or bran layer, the corpse was sometimes laid out on a mattress of kapok or horsehair, with a pillow beneath the head (Litten 1991). This practice reflects the strong symbolic association between death and sleep that developed in the later Georgian/Victorian mind during this period (Rugg 1999). The lead shells of the coffins in Rycote Chapel crypt were generally too well preserved to observe the inner coffin contents.
- 4.2.13 Once the viewing was over, the loose draperies were folded into the coffin, and the inner wooden coffin was sealed and encased within a lead shell. The fashioning of the lead shell was beyond the capabilities of most coffin makers, and was usually undertaken by a plumber (Litten 1991). Unlike the inner or outer wooden coffins, the lead shell had to be bespoke. Lead sheets were cut and shaped around the inner wooden coffin. The pieces of lead were then soldered together to create a water- and airtight container. Then, either an inscription was engraved directly onto the lead shell, or a fairly plain inner coffin breastplate was soldered or riveted thereon.
- 4.2.14 The outer wooden case of triple layered coffins was prepared and covered with upholstery and decorated with iron or brass studs, escutcheons and lid motifs in advance of the placement of the lead shell within it. A more elaborate outer breastplate was also riveted onto the coffin. Lowering the lead coffin into the outer wooden case was a difficult and delicate business, considerable care being necessary not to pierce the lead shell. The shell was also very heavy, usually requiring six men to lift it by means of lengths of webbing. The shell was lowered into the outer wooden case, and the webbing was then cut and removed. The lid of the outer wooden coffin was screwed or bolted into place (*ibid.*).

- 4.2.15 The elaborate coffins of the Bertie family were typical of those of the upper classes of this period, who invested considerable sums in the funeral and the coffin, in particular. All of the coffins within the crypt of Rycote Chapel included a lead shell, and in all but one case (anthropoid coffin 75) originally appeared to have been triple coffins. Survival of the outer case was very variable within the assemblage, with many lids and side panels being incomplete, often comprising only a few isolated fragments. As a result of this decay, many details of the upholstery stud patterns and metal fittings have been lost, whilst the provenance of some of the fittings was not entirely secure.
- 4.2.16 Coffins 68 and 69 of the 1st Countess and Earl dating to 1691 and 1699, respectively, are the earliest Rycote coffins of the triple wood-lead-wood type. All later coffins appear to be of this construction. Interestingly, this included coffin 50 of James, eldest son of the 3rd Earl (d. 1745) and coffin 59 of Montagu the 2nd Earl (d. 1743). Instead of an inner breastplate soldered onto the lead shell, the inscription commemorating these individuals comprised raised or appliquéd lettering on the coffin lids (Plates 40 to 42). In addition, the lid of coffin 59 was decorated with stamped star motifs at the foot and head of the lid, and three on each of the side panels (Plate 41). This design appeared very similar if not identical in style to an escutcheon type (BBM 6) recovered in St George's Church crypt, Bloomsbury (Boston 2006). A flaming urn lid motif was also stamped onto the lid of coffin 59 and was also present on coffin 50. Litten (1991) writes that coffins with appliqued inscriptions lacked an outer wooden case, and comprised only the lead shell encasing an inner wooden coffin. In this way, the lettering could be clearly observed. This does not appear to have been so with coffins 50 and 59, where remnants of the decorated outer wooden cases survived. Both lacked an outer breastplate, however.

Coffin upholstery

- 4.2.17 Upholstery covering the outer wooden case had survived poorly, but decayed remnants were found either adhering to surviving wood and/or to the reverse of many coffin fittings. Upholstery studs also attested to the presence of this textile. Given the status of the Bertie family, it is highly probable that the coffins were upholstered in velvet rather than baize (the poor man's fabric). Often this velvet overlay a base layer of shoddy (a loosely woven textile), which gave the velvet upholstery a smooth, lush appearance.
- 4.2.18 Whilst black was the predominant colour of upholstery fabric of this period, red, blue, green, yellow and brown are known from assemblages, such as Christchurch Spitalfields (Reeve and Adams 1993) and St George's Church, Bloomsbury (Boston 2006). Unfortunately, in Rycote Chapel crypt the poor survival of textile and discolouration from the decaying wood precluded the identification of colour in all but coffin 71, where upholstery survival was best. The velvet on this coffin was black.
- 4.2.19 Coffins that had not been upholstered included the earliest coffin (75) and last coffin 53 of the 6th Earl (dated 1884). This is in keeping with the prevailing coffin traditions

of their day. Upholstering the outer case came into vogue in the latter part of the 17th century, and continued throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries (Litten 1991). In the latter half of the Victorian period, upholstery was abandoned in favour of exposing the wood of the outer case (*ibid.*), which was the veneered, waxed or French polished. The type of wood used in coffins changed from elm to oak and mahogany, which achieved a better shine (Litten 1991).

- 4.2.20 The elaborate upholstery studwork on coffin 57 (dated 1854) was still in keeping with the 18th and early 19th century. The next most recent coffin was coffin 53 (dated 1884). This lacked all traces of upholstery or studs. It is assumed that the outer case had never been covered, in keeping with the prevailing funerary fashion. Metal fittings on this coffin were also smaller and very different in style to those of earlier periods. Grips and grip plates were identical to a series of six later 19th century polished coffins in the Sackville vault, Withyham (in Litten 1991). The large plain metal cross on the coffin lid of these coffins was very similar to the one found on coffin 53. Unlike the rectangular Sackville coffins, however, coffin 53 retained the single break shape.

4.3 Coffin fittings

Introduction

- 4.3.1 A full suite of coffin fittings comprised one to four *departum* plates (an inner and outer breastplate, a headplate and a footplate), lid motifs, escutcheons, grips and grip plates. In addition, brass or iron studs, originally used to secure the upholstery to the wooden case, had become a decorative device, being arranged to create complex patterns on the lid and side panels of the coffin.
- 4.3.2 By the later 18th century grips were produced by casting, but the rest of coffin fittings were stamped using dies (*ibid.*). Between 1720-30, these were produced by hand-operated die stamping machines, but after this such machines became power-assisted. Coffin fittings could then be produced *en masse* and were financially accessible to a wide audience by the mid- to late Georgian period (*ibid.*).
- 4.3.3 Excavations of the 18th- 19th century churchyard and crypt of Christ Church, Spitalfields, London, undertaken in the 1980s, revealed a large number of coffin fittings. The taxonomy compiled from these fittings (Reeve and Adams 1993) forms the basis for identification of the styles in vogue throughout this period. The coffin fittings at Rycote Chapel were compared to this catalogue and several matches were found. The fittings were also compared with styles found in crypts and churchyards excavated by Oxford Archaeology in recent years, including St Luke's church, Islington (Boston 2005), St George's church, Bloomsbury (Boston 2006), St Nicholas's Church, Penn, Wolverhampton (Boyle *et al.* 2002), two Non-Conformist burial sites in Kings Lynn (Boston 2004; Mahoney 2004), and a range of small rural churchyards. The coffin fittings in Rycote Chapel crypt were compared to these catalogues, and hitherto unknown types were drawn, and will be added to the OA catalogue. The dates of types that were matched to the above two catalogues are

valuable in refining the dates that certain types were in use. New types are presented as Plates 1 to 33 in Appendix 6.

- 4.3.4 Data from numerous post-medieval assemblages excavated by OA are being amalgamated into a more accurate and comprehensive 'master catalogue', which will be used in future 18th and 19th century burial clearances. The rich coffin fittings from Rycote Chapel are a valuable addition to this data set. Archaeological research into post-medieval funerary regalia is still a new field. Data from sites such as Rycote Chapel are therefore vital in enriching our understanding of the material culture of the post-medieval funeral, and through this, will enable researchers to gain greater insights into perceptions of death and resurrection in this period.
- 4.3.5 A summary of the coffins and the metal fittings with which they were decorated is presented in Table 3 Appendix 3. In the following text, styles first recognised and catalogued at Christ Church, Spitalfields are prefixed by the abbreviation: CCS. Those first recognised at St Luke's Church, Islington, are prefixed by OLR, those from St George's Church, Bloomsbury by BBM, and those from St Bartholomew's Church, Penn, Wolverhampton by SBP.

Symbolism of motifs used in coffin fittings

- 4.3.6 The motifs displayed on coffin fittings were not merely decorative, but were deeply imbued with symbolism. Many represented Christian symbols of death, eternal life and resurrection, whilst others owe more to secular symbolism. One example of clear Christian symbolism was the Crucifixion scene depicted on the lid motif of coffin 64 (Plate 15). Classical symbolism also abounded, for example, the urn (an Ancient Greek symbol of mourning) a very popular motif well into the 1850s (Plates 10 and 14). The flaming urn was also symbolic of death and everlasting life.
- 4.3.7 Some motifs refer to the age or unexpectedness of the death of a particular individual. For example, the broken column denotes untimely or unexpected death, a life cut short prematurely. Cherubim were particularly favoured for the coffins of infants and children. Angels and cherubim were popular motifs on all types of coffin fittings in Rycote Chapel, for example on grip plate CCS 3 (coffin 71), the lid motifs of coffin 54 (Plate 11) and 64 (Plate 64), and the escutcheons on coffin 64 (Plate 19). Angels obviously denote heaven and the afterlife, whilst a winged cherub's head without a body symbolised the departed soul (Plates 16 and 19). The lid motifs illustrated on Plates 16 and 19 depict two angels holding aloft the Crown of Christ, with the inscription '*Gloria*', announcing the Glory of God. The palm fronds in the angel's hands represent spiritual victory over evil, success, eternal peace, Jesus' victory over death. Three winged cherub heads represent departed souls.
- 4.3.8 Another example of composite symbolism was present on lid motif CCS 4 of coffin 57. It depicted a snake biting its tail, intersected by an inverted flaming torch. The circle formed by the snake, and the snake consuming its tail symbolises eternity, life without end. The flaming torch symbolises life. By being inverted, however, conversely, it represents death.

- 4.3.9 Numerous breastplate inscriptions, lid motifs and grip plates of the Rycote coffins depicted crowns or coronets. Although in some contexts a crown has religious symbolism described above, the prevalence of this motif at Rycote suggests more worldly concerns, specifically displaying the aristocratic status of the Earls of Abingdon. Coronet motifs were present on breastplates 57, 60, 63, 71 and 72, lid motifs 56, 60, 71, 72 and composite grip plates 64 and 72. According to heraldic conventions, two types of crowns or coronets were present: an adaptation of an eastern crown (on breastplate 63) and the earl's coronet (in all other depictions). An earl's coronet is characterised by eight strawberry leaves alternating with eight silver balls (known as 'pearls' even though they are not) raised in spikes, of which five 'pearls' and four leaves are displayed on heraldic devices (Cox 1999). On brass breastplates 57, 60, 71 and 72, the Bertie coat of arms, the crest was an earl's crown.
- 4.3.10 Lid motifs of coronets were painted a range of colours depicting the crimson velvet, ermine, gold and pearls of the coronet. The grip plates of coffin 64 (Plate 27) was unusual, in being comprised of two separate fittings: an earl's coronet lid motif (of a type not found elsewhere in the crypt) slotted in behind and above the unstratified grip plate type depicted in Plate 25. A similar arrangement was noted in the grip plates of coffin 72, where a coronet lid motif had been slotted in behind and above the CCS 3 grip plate depicting cherubim and foliage.
- 4.3.11 Coronets motifs have been found on coffin fittings of the aristocracy in other crypts (e.g. the Sackville coffins at Withyham, Sussex (Litten 1991).
- 4.3.12 Flowers have long played a symbolic role in funerals, the colour and species conveying complex ideas about life, death and rebirth. Breastplates and grip plates are particularly rich in foliage and floral motifs. Whilst the majority are stylised or generic plants, occasionally it is possible to recognise the species. At Rycote, roses and daisies were identified on breastplates, and roses on the grips of coffin 56. Roses represented beauty, hope and unfailing love. Depending on the stage of their opening, the rose may represent the age of the person at the time of their death, a bud denoting a child, a partial bloom a teenager, and a rose in full bloom, an adult. The rose motif on the grip of coffin 56 of Anne the 2nd Countess (aged 40 years at death) appropriately depicted full-blown roses. Other plant motifs seen on the fittings in Rycote Chapel crypt included acanthus leaves (symbolising the heavenly garden) and daisies (symbolising childhood innocence, youth, and Jesus the Infant). A number of other fittings displayed generic flowers that could not be identified.

Metals used in the coffin fittings

- 4.3.13 The metals used in coffin fittings varied considerably in cost, and hence, were eloquent of the wealth of the deceased or his/ her survivors. In the 18th century, iron was the cheapest material, followed by tin, lead, brass and ormolou (in roughly ascending order of expense). The practice of coating cheaper metals with more expensive ones was occasionally used to give the illusion that the coffin was more expensive than it was. Dipping iron in tin, silvering tin and lead, and gilding tin and brass (ormolou) are all known from both coffin catalogues of the period and from the

archaeological record. The outer breastplates of Rycote Chapel coffins 51, 62 and 70 appeared to have been thus treated, being composed of silvered lead, gilt tin and silvered lead, respectively. Less surprising in this assemblage was the use of ormolou in the coffin fittings of at least six coffins. In three more, it was uncertain if the brass of the fittings had been gilded, due to poor preservation of the surfaces. This problem has been encountered in other coffin assemblages (e.g. St George's Church, Bloomsbury (Boston 2006)), where the gilding only survived on the reverse of the fittings, which were afforded greater protection by the wooden case to which they were attached. Ormolou (gilding of brass or bronze to create the effect of gold) was commonly used in furniture of the 18th century, and remained particularly popular in clock faces throughout the Victorian era. Ormolou coffin fittings are almost exclusively found in triple coffins of this period.

- 4.3.14 Three late 17th and very early 18th century coffins in Rycote Chapel crypt were unusual in having breastplates, grip plates and grips of iron, a material more associated with working class coffins in the later Georgian and Victorian eras. Coffins 58 and 67 (dated 1715 and 1687- 1715) both had breastplates of iron, the central rectangle being surrounded by decorative ironwork depicting swirling foliage, reminiscent of coffin lace. The grips and grip plates of these coffins were also of iron, as were those of coffin 69 (dated 1699). They differed in their construction and decoration from later fittings, in being flat plates pierced by circles and simple geometric shapes (Plates 23 and 24), rather than the very thin metal sheets with elaborate motifs, produced by dye- stamping, that were so ubiquitous from the mid-18th to 19th centuries. Indeed, it appears from the excavations of Quaker burial grounds in Kings Lynn, Norfolk (Mahoney 2005), Hemingford Greys, Cambs. (Clough 2007), and Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey (Bashford and Pollard 1998), that only the Quakers retained this more simple form of decoration well into the 19th century.
- 4.3.15 The use of iron in the Rycote Chapel crypt assemblage is unlikely to have been motivated by notions of economy. It is more probable that before the Industrial Revolution, iron had yet to acquired its base and utilitarian associations. By the late 17th century, specialisations in working iron (eg. in locks, keys, chains and the like) had developed in some villages, but the scale of production remained very small. It was only from the mid-18th century, following technological innovations, such as Huntsman's production of cast steel (1740), the replacement of charcoal with coke as a source of fuel (1760s), and significant developments in purification of the metal and in fuel efficiency that manufacturing grew to a vast scale (Gardiner and Wenborn 1995). In a time when iron working was less developed, the elaborate borders of iron breastplates of coffins 58 and 67 represent wrought iron work of considerable skill, and far from being 'poor men's coffin fittings may well have held some caché with their contemporaries.

Departum plates

- 4.3.16 No footplates or headplates were present in this assemblage, and predominantly outer breastplates were found. Two large rectangular commemoration plaques recording the

ancestry and achievements of the 1st Earl (coffin 69) and Anne the 2nd Countess (coffin 58) are reproduced in Appendices 4 and 5. These *departum* plates should probably not be described as ‘breastplates’ being plain and much larger than breastplates of this period. They were much larger, however, measuring 37.8 cm x 26 cm, and 34.4 cm x 22 cm, respectively. Both were completely plain.

4.3.17 All but one breastplate was of a type not previously seen in the mass- produced designs at Christ Church Spitalfields, or in the OA catalogue. This was the brass tapered outer breastplate of coffin 56 of Emily the 5th Countess (d. 1838), which matched CCS 20. CCS 20 is a plain tapered design with a single border, and dated 1790-1853.

4.3.18 The earliest breastplate in Rycote Chapel crypt commemorated the seventh and stillborn son of the 1st Earl and Countess (d. 1684/5), and comprised a small plain brass or ormolou rectangle. More elaborate metalworking in the form of a central panel surrounded by ‘coffin lace’ was present on the iron breastplates of coffin 58 and 67, dating to 1715 and 1687-1715, respectively (Plate 3). The grips and grip plates of the latter similarly were of iron. The significance of this material is discussed above in paragraph 4.3.13.

4.3.19 Brass or ormolou breastplates inscribed with the family crest and motto ‘*Virtus Ariete Tortio*’ were exclusive to the coffins of the Earls and Countesses (coffins 57, 60, 71, and 72), as were the earl’s coronet lid motifs (coffins 56, 60, 71 and 72). These would have been bespoke. A more simply decorated brass breastplate also sporting a coronet similar to an eastern crown, commemorated the only non- Bertie within the crypt, one Harriet Cage (coffin 63), the third daughter of the Hon. General Thomas Cage.

4.3.20 Mass- manufactured breastplates made by die- punching, but of types thus far unique to Rycote, comprised a central panel surrounded by punched stylised foliage motifs. These breastplates of silvered lead and ormolou were found on coffins 51, 64, and 70 of three female members of the family (Plates 1, 6 and 7).

Lid motifs and escutcheons

4.3.21 Lid motifs and escutcheons are stamped pieces of metal decorating the upholstery of the outer wooden case. Lid motifs are larger than escutcheons and tend to be located centrally in the chest and knee areas of the coffin lid. Escutcheons are most commonly found in the corners and along the margin of the upholstery studwork panels of the coffin lid and side panels of the outer wooden case. Both were recovered in the coffins in Rycote Chapel crypt.

Table 1 Coffin fitting types previously recorded on other post-medieval sites, with date ranges (n = 21)

Coffin	Date of burial	Matching type*	Other sites with this type*	Numbers seen	Previous date range	Revised date range
Breastplates						
56	1838	CCS 20	BBM, OLR	40	1790-1853	1790-1853
Lid motifs						
51	1760	CCS 25	BBM	3	1825-1833	1760-1833
57	1854	CCS 4	OLR	9	1835-1847	1835-1854

63	1818	CCS 2 (variant)	OLR, BBM	56	1795-1847	1795-1847
64	1763	Possibly CCS 6	OLR, BBM, SBP	52	1779-1852	1763-1852
Grips						
51	1760	CCS 4	OLR, BBM, SBP	299	1743-1880	1743-1880
54	1839	CCS 3	OLR, BBM, SBP	130	1729-1850	1729-1850
55	1838	CCS 4	OLR, BBM, SBP	299	1743-1880	1743-1880
57	1854	CCS 11		1	undated	1854
62	1818	CCS 2a	OLR, BBM, SBP	62	1811-1830s	1811-1830s
71	1794	CCS 5 (variant)	OLR, BBM	87	1744-1835	1744-1835
72	1799	CCS 5				
Grip plates						
51	1760	CCS 3	BBM, OLR, SBP	171	1768-1880	1760-1880
54	1839	CCS 4	OLR, BBM, SBP	10	1807-1850	1807-1850
71	1797	CCS 3	BBM, OLR, SBP	171	1768-1880	1760-1880
72	1799	CCS 3	BBM, OLR, SBP	171	1768-1880	1760-1880
Upholstery studwork						
50	1745	CCS 51	BBM	2	1812	1745-1812
59	1743	CCS 26		5	1847	1743-1847
70	1760	CCS 51	BBM	2	1812	1745-1812
71	1794	CCS 53		1	1794	1794-1799
72	1799	CCS 53		1	1794	1794-1799

*Abbreviations: CCS = Christ Church, Spitalfields; OLR = St Luke's Church, Islington,; BBM = St George's Church, Bloomsbury

4.3.22 Lid motifs were recovered from the remains of the outer case of 13 coffins. In many cases there were more than one per coffin (usually located over the head and knee areas). A number of matches were found with the Christ Church Spitalfields taxonomy, including CCS 4 and 25 were also recorded. A slight variant on CCS 2 and possibly CCS 6. By far the most common new motifs were variations on the Earl's coronet, found on four coffins (56, 60, 71 and 72). Unlike the other lid motifs, which were unpainted and displayed the colour of the metals of which they were composed, the coronet motifs were painted in a range of colours, described above. Being specifically Earl's coronets makes it probable that these were bespoke, or at least manufactured in very small numbers.

4.3.23 The two lid motif types not previously seen at Christ Church, Spitalfields, have been identified in other coffin fitting assemblages. The Crucifixion motif on coffin 64 (dated 1763, Plate 15) was very similar to one seen at St George's Church, Bloomsbury (BBM 5). The only difference between these two examples was that the Rycote Jesus was ascetically slim, whereas the St George's Jesus was somewhat well rounded and Herculean in proportions. The death motif of the skull and cross bones and the snake (in this case symbolizing the Original Sin and human mortality) was missing from the St George's example due to corrosion.

4.3.24 The second lid motif on coffin 64 (Plate 16) appeared very similar to one on coffin 54 (Plate 11). Two angels holding aloft the Crown of Christ was seen on lid motif CCS 6, although the illustration was too poor to be quite certain that it was identical. It was also present at St Luke's, Islington, St George's Bloomsbury, and at St Bartholomew, Penn. This design has also been used as a border motif in breastplates from St

Hilda's, South Shields (OA in progress), where the central panel was framed by similar motifs.

- 4.3.25 There were surprisingly few escutcheons recovered from Rycote Chapel crypt, given the ornateness of the other coffin fittings. Poor preservation of the outer wooden case may have influenced their survival. In addition, their small size does render these fittings more prone to corrosion and complete destruction. Escutcheons were recovered from 18th- early 19th century coffins 56, 64 71 and 72, although it was only on well- preserved coffin 71 that they were identified in significant numbers (dated 1794). These fittings on the lid and side panels were of ormolou and were similar in type to CCS 1 and CCS 12. No matches were found in the OA catalogue. A new escutcheon type depicting a winged cherub was identified on coffin 64 (dated 1763). It showed a broad resemblance to CCS 20, but differed in proportions and detail, and so has been categorised as a new type (Plate 19).
- 4.3.26 The outer case of late Victorian coffin 53 of the 6th Earl does not appear to have been upholstered, and was probably French polished or veneered instead, in the mode of the day (Litten 1991). The plain wood had been decorated by small fittings, that may be described as escutcheons, but were stylistically very different from earlier types described above, lacking the punched, raised detail of these fittings. The style of these decorative brass fittings appeared to owe much to contemporary household furniture fittings. The outer coffin was further ornamented by decorative hinges, which are depicted on this plate.

Grips and grip plates

- 4.3.27 Once purely functional, the grips with which coffin bearers steadied the coffin became stylistically elaborate over the 18th century, as did the grip plates to which the grips were attached to the coffin. Needing to be robust, the metals used for grips were restricted to iron and brass and often gilded (ormolou), whereas a greater variety of materials was possible for the grip plates. Grips were manufactured by casting, whilst grip plates were stamped using die- punches.
- 4.3.28 Fifteen coffins in Rycote Chapel crypt had extant grips. Seven grip types matched the Christ Church, Spitalfields taxonomy, which included CCS 2a, 3, 4 (on two coffins), 5 (on two coffins) and 11. Previously uncatalogued types were present in nine coffins and are illustrated on Plates 20- 24, 46, 49 and 50.
- 4.3.29 The grips of seven coffins were constructed of iron, and were predominantly simple unadorned designs, the exception being coffin 55, where the fitting type displayed the cherubim and foliage motifs of CCS 4, probably the most ubiquitous grip style of the 18th and 19th centuries. The significance of using iron in the coffin fittings has already been discussed above. These fittings pre-dated the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution, including iron casting or the mechanisation of die-punching of coffin fittings. Hence, they lacked the raised motifs of later centuries. Decoration, such as it was, was achieved through piercing shapes in the plain iron plates. Such simple styles were replaced by die- punched fittings in most burials, although similar grip plates continued to be used into the 19th century by some non-Conformist

groups, such as the Quakers. Grip plates of similar construction and style were excavated at the Quaker meeting house, Kings, Lynn, Norfolk, and in the Kingston-upon-Thames burial ground, Surrey (Bashford and Pollard 1998). More elaborate grip motifs were cast in brass (n = 5) or were of ormolou (n = 2).

- 4.3.30 Grip plates were associated with 11 coffins, and one plate was found loose in the crypt (Plate 25). Four of these grip plate styles were matched to the Christ Church, Spitalfields, taxonomy but none to the OA catalogue. The matched types from three coffins were CCS 3 and one was CCS 4- both bearing motifs of winged cherubim and stylised foliage. CCS 3 is the most common grip plate type of the late post-medieval period, comprising over 50% of grip plates at Christ Church, Spitalfields and the three OA sites described above (Boston 2006). It is thus unsurprising that it was also the most common type at Rycote.
- 4.3.31 New grip plate types are illustrated on Plates 22- 28. The earliest and latest were comprised of flat metal plates cut or pierced to make decorative devices, albeit being considerably plainer than the elaborate repoussé decoration created by the stamping of thin metal plates of 18th and early 19th century grip plates.
- 4.3.32 Grip plates 64 and 72 were composite, in that they comprised the grip plate superimposed upon a lid motif depicting an earl's coronet. This has been described above in paragraph 4.3.10. The unstratified grip plate found loose within the crypt (Plate 25) was identical in style to the front plate of composite fitting 64 (Plate 27), and it is probable that this loose fitting originally formed part of coffin 64.
- 4.3.33 Grip plates were made of brass (n = 3), ormolou or brass (n = 1), ormolou (n = 2), and iron (n = 5).

Upholstery studwork

- 4.3.34 From the later 17th to later 18th centuries, upholstery covering the outer wooden case was held in place by iron or brass studs, which were sometimes painted or gilded. Over time, rows of studs became a decorative device, dividing the coffin lid and side panels into panels of different shapes, being clustered together to form rosettes or triangles, or intersecting to form geometric designs. Due to the overall poor preservation of the outer wooden cases in Rycote Chapel crypt, such patterns were impossible to identify in many cases.
- 4.3.35 Eleven coffins had extant upholstery studs. Upholstery studwork types from Christ Church, Spitalfields (CCS 26, 51, the lid of 53 and the side panels of 35) were identified in four coffins, coffins 71 and 72 showing the unusual combination of the different lid and side panel designs (CCS 53 and 35). Five coffins displayed styles not identified at Christ Church, Spitalfields, or in the OA catalogue. These are illustrated on Plates 29- 33.
- 4.3.36 Studs were made of brass, which in at least seven cases had been gilded.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 Towards the end of the 17th century, the crypt beneath the chancel of Rycote Chapel was purpose-built as the final resting place of the Bertie family, possibly just prior to or soon after the demise of the 1st Earl. The early 17th century coffin of the infant brother of the 1st Earl was also included in the crypt, despite this infant dying approximately 50 years previously. Interments spanned six generations of the Bertie family, with Harriet Cage being the only non-family member. Considerable biographical detail was collected from *departum* plate inscriptions, and all but one interment was identified.
- 5.1.2 Interments spanned the period from 1649 to 1884, and coffins clearly reflected the changing face of funerary fashion over this time. Anthropoid coffins are fairly rare, and coffin 75 was particularly unusual its level of detail in the depiction of the face and body. The majority of coffins in Rycote Chapel crypt dated to the 18th and early 19th centuries- the heyday of the funeral, when expenditure on all aspects of funerary panoply reached its height. This is reflected in the ornateness of the Rycote coffins of this period.
- 5.1.3 The 17th and late 19th century coffins were particularly valuable, the former being less readily identified and less common in other crypt and churchyard assemblages in Britain thus far. As a result of the 1856 national prohibition of burial within urban churchyards and crypts, later Victorian burials are absent from the archaeological record of these sites. Alternative secular burial grounds set up at this time have not undergone the same extent of re-development in recent times, probably because many are still or were recently in use. As a result, later Victorian burials have been under-investigated thus far. These factors make the long continuity of interment in Rycote Chapel crypt particularly valuable in the identification of temporal changes in funerary fashions in the post-medieval period.
- 5.1.4 The good preservation and the richness of the Rycote Chapel coffins has furthered research in the material culture of funerals, allowing identification of new types of breastplates, lid motifs, escutcheons, grips and grip plates, and refinement in the dating of many previously recognised styles. These new styles will be added to the OA catalogue, and will undoubtedly prove a valuable addition to this new and rapidly expanding field.

Recommendations

- 5.1.5 The coffins within Rycote Chapel crypt represent an important assemblage, both in terms of the geneology of the Bertie family, but also in terms of the duration of burial within the crypt, and the richness and range of coffin fittings. It is highly recommended, given the poor preservation of the outer wooden cases, that the coffins remain within the crypt and are moved or disturbed as little as possible. It is seminal to keep together the components of a single coffin, which may have become loosened through disturbance or over the course of time.

5.1.6 Many of the lead shells were recorded as being sealed or had been only slightly breached. Given the malleable nature of lead, disturbance will only exacerbate this decay. Where coffins had been completely sealed, the survival of organic remains within the coffin is probable. This may include soft tissue of the corpse, textile (such as the shroud and coffin sheets), and horsehair or kapok of mattresses (on which the dead were sometimes laid out within the coffin). This organic survival has obvious Health and Safety issues in terms of biohazards (such as anthrax), as well as being aesthetically unappealing, both to the visual and olfactory senses. With these considerations in mind, it may well be best not to move the coffins unless absolutely necessary.

APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

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APPENDIX 2 LIST OF THE BERTIE FAMILY INTERRED WITHIN THE CRYPT (N = 24)

Coffin	Surname	Christian name	Title	Date of birth	Date of death	Age-at-death	Additional info.
50	Norris	James	Lord	1735	13-11-1745	10	Eldest son of Willoughby 3rd Earl; died in the fire that razed Rycote Palace (d. 12/10/1745)
51	Bertie	Sophia	The Rt Hon., Lady	1748	12-10-1760	12	Daughter of Willoughby 3rd Earl
52	Bertie	Albermarle	The Hon.	1812	4-2-1825	14	Son of Montagu 6th Earl
53	Bertie	Montague	6th Earl of Abingdon, Lord Lt of Berks. 1854-81	19-1-1808	8-2-1884	76	Member of Parliament, active politician
54	Bertie	Charlotte Anne Emily	Lady	1826	19-12-1839	13	Daughter of the Hon. Rev. Frederic (son of 4th Earl) and Lady Georgina Bertie
55	Bertie	G----			?1838		Possibly Lady Georgina Bertie, mother of Charlotte Emily Anne (coffin 54), wife of Frederic
56	Bertie	Emily	Countess of Abingdon		28-08-1838	62	Wife of Montague 5th Earl, nee Gage, daughter of the Hon. Thomas Gage and Margaret Kemble
57	Bertie	Montagu	5th Earl of Abingdon, Lord Lt. Of the County of Berks.	30-4-1784	16-10-1854	70	Montague 5th Earl of Abingdon, Lord Lt. of the County of Berks. 1826-1854
58	Bertie	Anne	The Right Hon., Baroness of ? Kinderton, Countess of Abingdon		28-4-1715	40	Descended of Gisbert Venables, one of 7 barons of the Palatine of Chester (William the Conqueror), daughter of Sir Peter Venables, Baron of Kinderton. <i>Full inscription reproduced in Appendix 4.</i>
59	Venerable Bertie	Montague	The Rt Hon., 2nd Earl of Abingdon, Lord Norreys of Rycote	1673	16-6-1743	71	2nd Earl of Abingdon. Married Anne, last of the Venables. Changed his name to Venables Bertie; Lord Lt of Oxon. 1715 & 1702-05, Lord Lt of Berks. 1701-02; no surviving issue
60	Bertie	Willoughby	3rd Earl of Abingdon	1693	9-06-1760	67	Son of James (brother of Montagu 2nd Earl) & Elizabeth Willoughby
61	Bertie	Georgina Augusta	Lady	1815	4-5-1815	3 weeks	Infant daughter of Montague 5th Earl
62	Bertie	Percy?		23-11-?181--	?2-3----		Probably Vere Peregrine, d. 1818 (infant); son of Montague 5th Earl
63	Cage	Harriet			19-11-18?35	68	Unknown relationship to family. 3rd daughter of the late Honble General Thomas Cage.
64	Bertie	Anna Marion	The Rt Hon., Countess of Abingdon	1709	21-12-1763	54	Wife of Willoughby 3rd Earl; daughter of Sir John Collins

Coffin	Surname	Christian name	Title	Date of birth	Date of death	Age-at-death	Additional info.
65	Bartie	Charlotte Anne Emily	The Rt Hon. Lady		11-1-1799	30	Unmarried daughter of Willoughby 4th Earl
66		Unknown	Unknown				
67	Bertie	James			--/ -2/ ---	14 weeks 6 days	Only son of Montagu 2nd Earl; Due to his untimely death the line moved to the son of James, Montagu's brother
68	Bertie	James	The Rt Hon., 1st Earl of Abingdon, Lord Norreys of Rycot(5th Baron), Lord Lt of Oxon. 1689-1697	1653	22/5/1699	46	Created 1st Earl of Abingdon (1681/2); Baron Norreys of Rycote title through maternal line. Father Earl of Lindsay. <i>Detailed commemorative inscription is reproduced as Appendix 5.</i>
69		Unknown	Unknown				Adult coffin alongside James 1st Earl- probably Eleanora, his wife, daughter of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley
70	Bertie	Bridget	The Rt Hon. Lady		9-12-1760	27	Unmarried daughter of Willoughby 3rd Earl
71	Bertie	Charlotte Anne Emily	The Rt Hon, Countess of Abingdon		28-1-1794	44	Wife of Willoughby 4th Earl; daughter of Admiral Peter Warren
72	Bertie	Willoughby	The Rt Hon, 4th Earl of Abingdon, Lord Norreys, Baron of Rycote		26-9-1799	60	Married Charlotte Warren on 7/7/1768; had at least 4 sons; music patron & composer & political writer
73	Bertie	Robert		28-2-1676	6-8-1710		4th son of James 1st Earl of Abingdon, and Eleanora; m. 3/2/1708 to Catherine eldest daughter of Richard Lord Wenman of Cassewen. Oxon, Viscount Thame, Baron of Kilmamham, Dublin
74	Bertie	Not named		5-1-1684 or 5	5-1-1684 or 5		7th son and 10th child of the Rt Hon. James Bertie and Eleanora
75	Bertie	Not named			13- lenn-1649		Son of Montague, Earl of Lindsey, and Lady Bridget Norreys, who died in infancy

APPENDIX 4 INSCRIPTION ON THE MEMORIAL PLATE OF COFFIN 58

The Right Hon

Anne Countess of Abingdon Baroness of Kinderton

Daughter and heiress to Peter Venerables Baron of Kinderton by his Wife Catherine Shirly one of ye Daughters of Sr Robert Shirly & sister of ye present Earl F---- RLRS [unclear script] of Chartley.

By her father ye ancient Baront of Kinderton descended to her in a direct line without any collateral variation from GISBERT VENABLES one of ye seven Barons in ye Palatinate of Chester under Wm ye Conquerour.

She was born ye seventh of May A.D. 1674, married ye two and twentieth of Sept. 1687. To Montague Lord Norreys, oldest son & Heir to James late Earl of Abingdon, whom he succeeded to His Estate & Hons A.D. 1699.

She was Lady of ye Bedchamber to Her Late Majesty Queen Anne from ye first year of Her Reign till ye death of ye Excellent Queen. By Whom She was highly regarded, & from whom ye reed. such constant Marks of a particular affection, ye wn Her Majesty was prevail'd on to displace her Lord, wth ye rest of ye Nobility & Gentry of ye same Principles. Ye Her Love & Duty to her Lord made her choose to quitt ye court & accompany Him in his Retirement, until in a more Happy juncture of Affairs. He was restored to His Employments and she returned to her Attendance on ye Best of Queens, From which time she continued ever near to her till Her Majesty's Death wch happened Aug ye first 1714 wch but a little preceeded & perhaps hastened Her own.

She died April Twenty-eighth 1715.

Her body is here buried in Peace, but Her name (we trust) liveth
for ever more

APPENDIX 5 INSCRIPTION ON MEMORIAL PLATE OF COFFIN 68

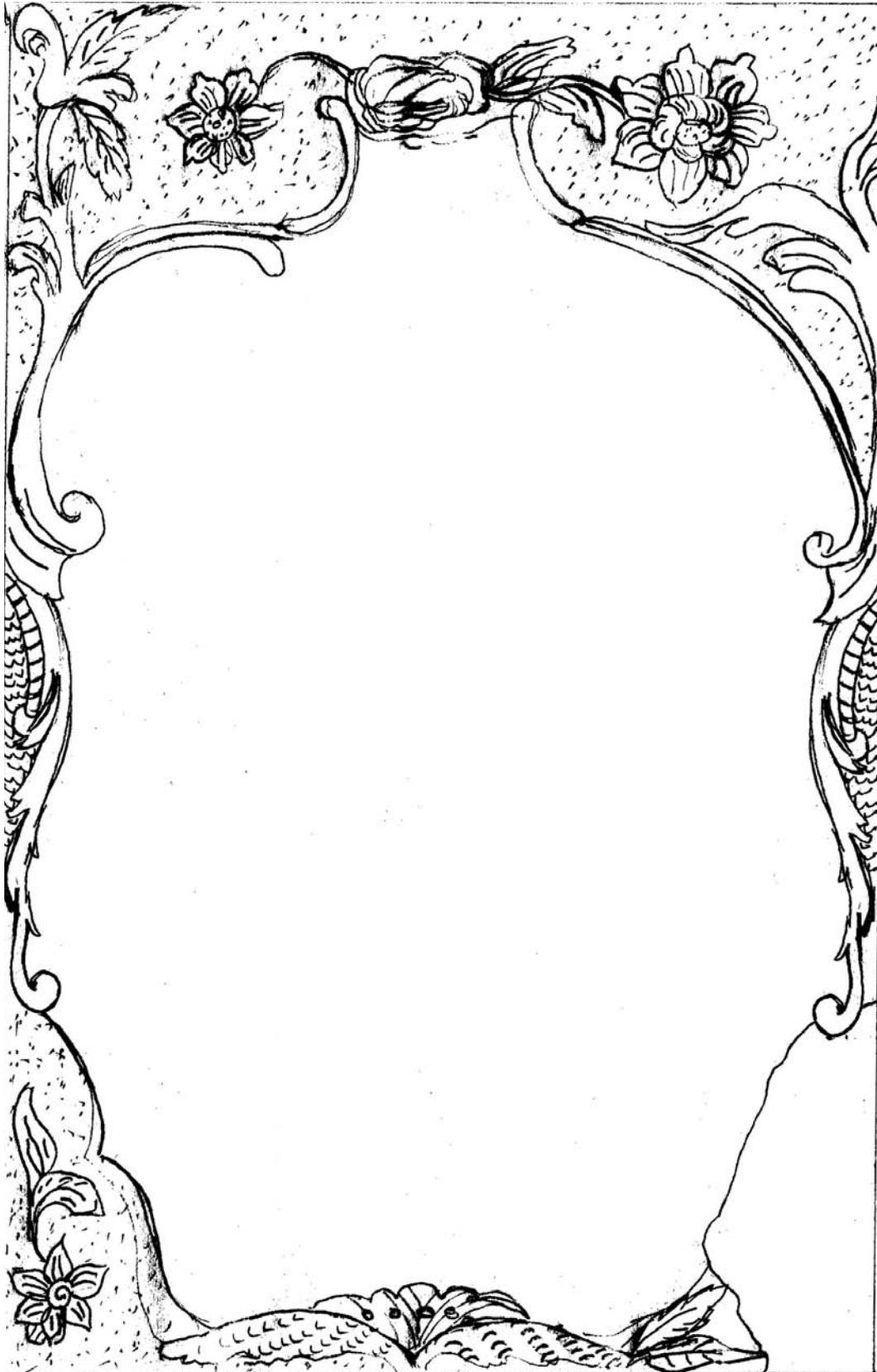
‘..... the Rt Honble James Bertie Earl of Abingdon and Ld Norreys of Rycot/ Son of Montagu Earl of Lidsey (Ld Great Chamberlain of England) by Bridget his/ wife, Baroness Norreys, sole Daughter and Heir to Edward Wray Esqr & the Lady Eliz/ Norreys, sole Daughter and Heir to Francis Ld Norreys, Viscount Thame and Earl of Berkshire, from whom the Barony of Norreys descending to him. He was, for his Great Loyalty and Services to ye Crown, created Earl of Abingdon, by K Ch2 A D 1681.

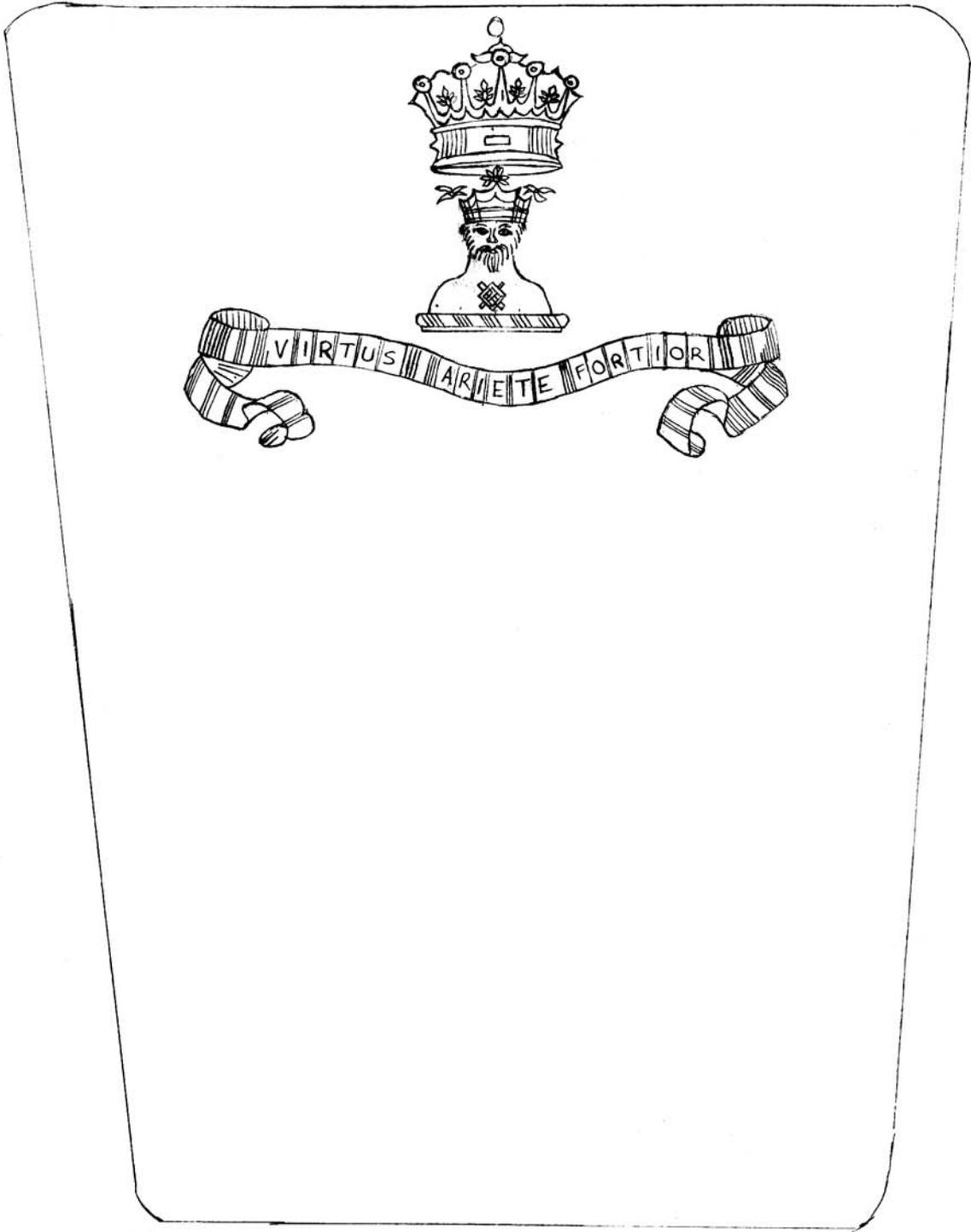
He was Ld Lieutt of this county from the year 1674 to the year 1687. And Afterwards/ Ld Lieutt and Custos Rotulorum from the 1st of K.W. & Qu Ma A.D. 1688 till ye year 1697/ And was also Chief Justice in Eyre of all the King’s Forests & c. South of the Trent/ He married to his 1st Wife Eleanora Eldest Daughter & at last sole [heir] to Hen. Lee of/ Ditchley in this county (by Anne his wife, Daughter of Sr John Danvers, & sister & co-heir/ to Hen. Danvers Esqr Nephew & Heir to Hen. Earl of Danby). She dyed 31 May A 1691/ & left him 6 sons, Montagu (who succeeded him in his Honour), James, Henry, Robt, Peregrine/ & Charles, & 3 Daughtrs Bridget, Anne, & Mary, & lyes here interred with him./

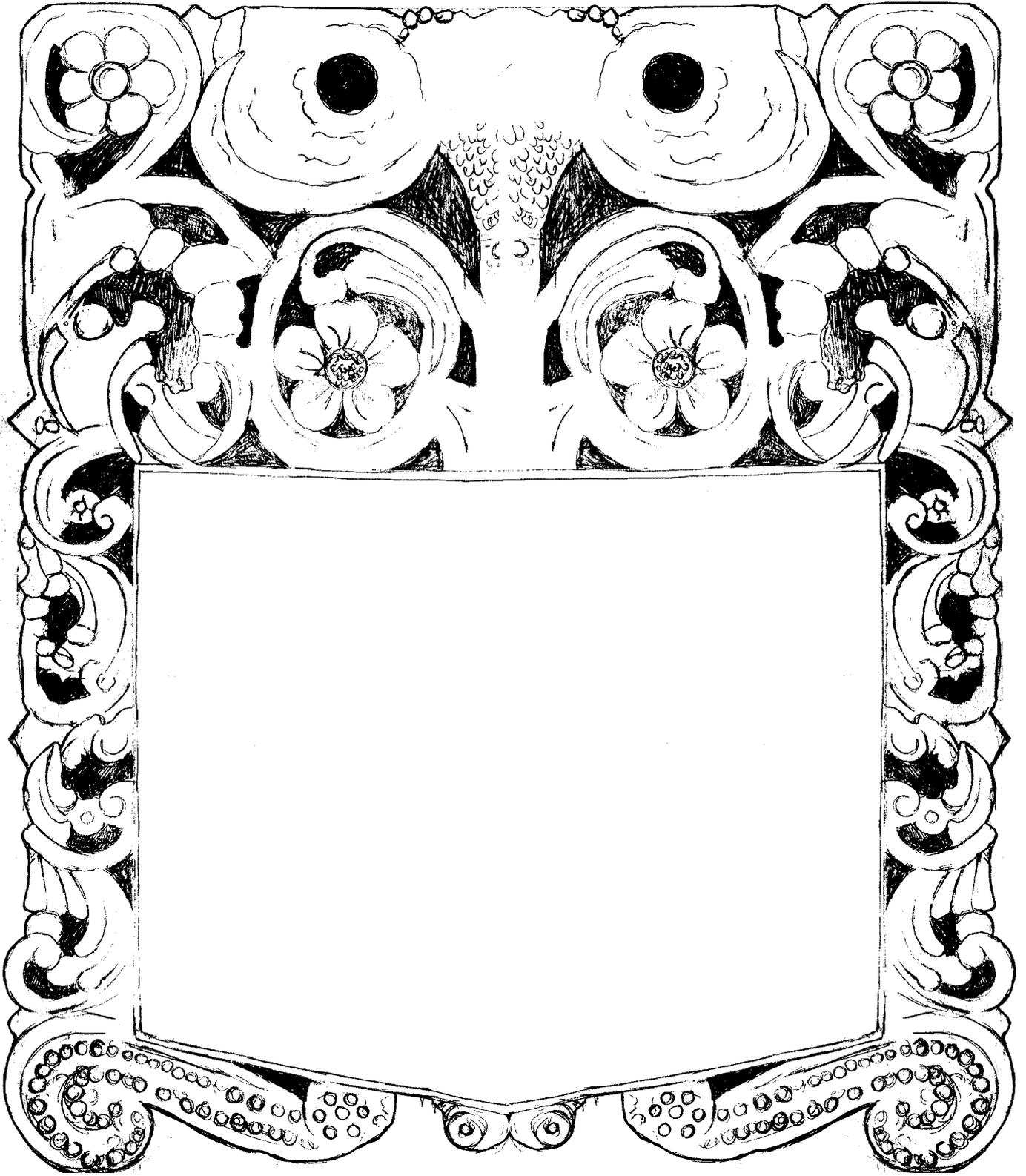
In ye Year 1698 He took to his 2d wife Catherine Eldest Daughtr & co-heir to Sr Thomas/ Chamberlaine Bart. & widow of Richd Visct Wenman; and he departed this life in Wes--mr/ on Monday 22 May a 1699 in the 46th Year of his age; to the general almentation of/ his country of whise Liberty and Religion he was a constant and zealous Assertor.’

APPENDIX 6
PLATES 1-50
NEW COFFIN FITTING TYPES

APPENDIX 7 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**Site name:** Rycote Chapel Crypt**Site code:** RYCOTE04**Grid reference:** SP667046**Type of watching brief:** Coffin recording**Date and duration of project:** March 2004**Summary of results:** Twenty-four coffins of the Bertie family (Earls of Abingdon and Barons Norreys of Rycote) were recorded in the small private crypt beneath the chancel of Rycote Chapel. They dated between 1648 and 1884. The coffins are remarkable for the wealth of coffin fittings, many displaying new types. Breastplate inscriptions identified the names of the deceased in all but one case.**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2002.52







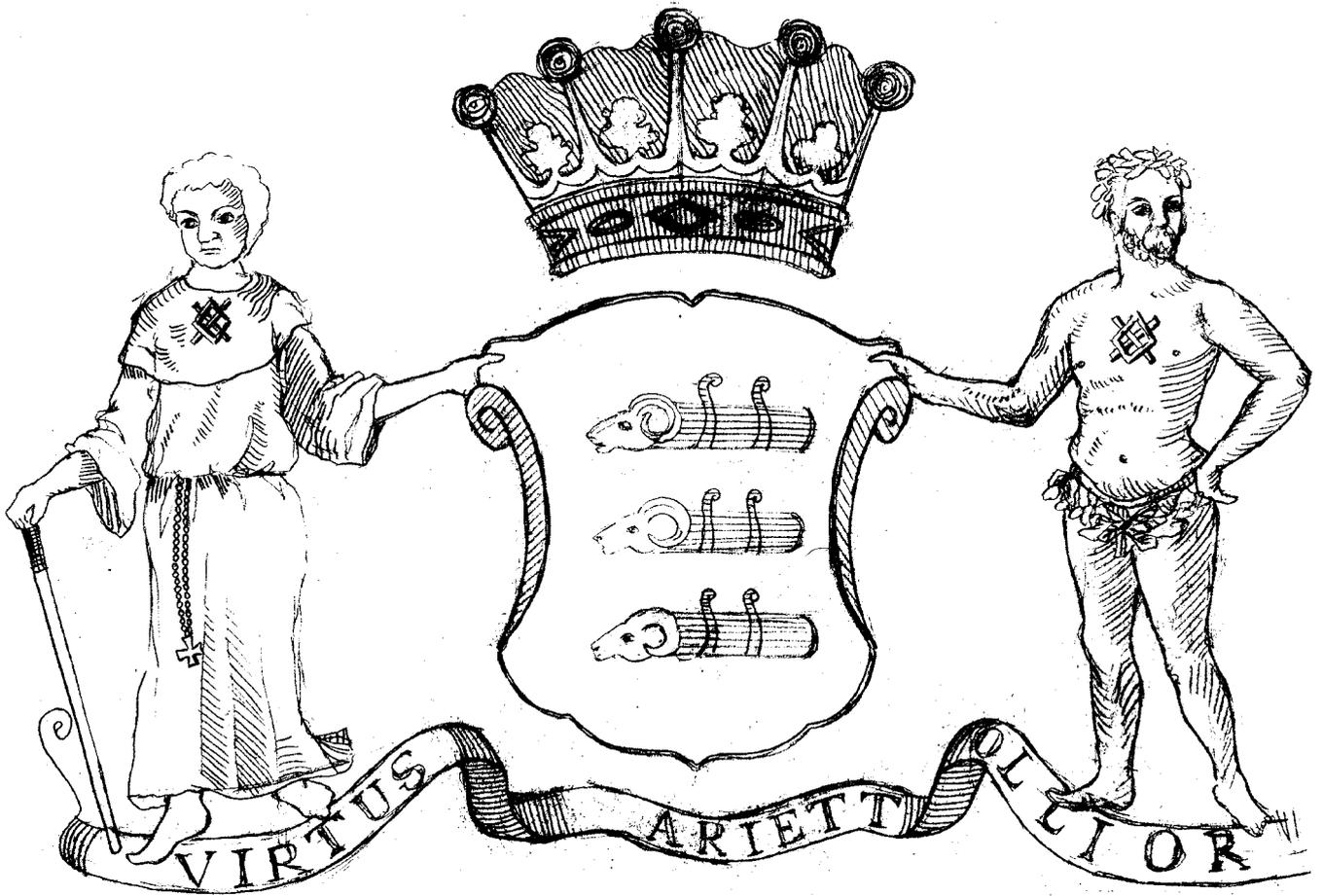
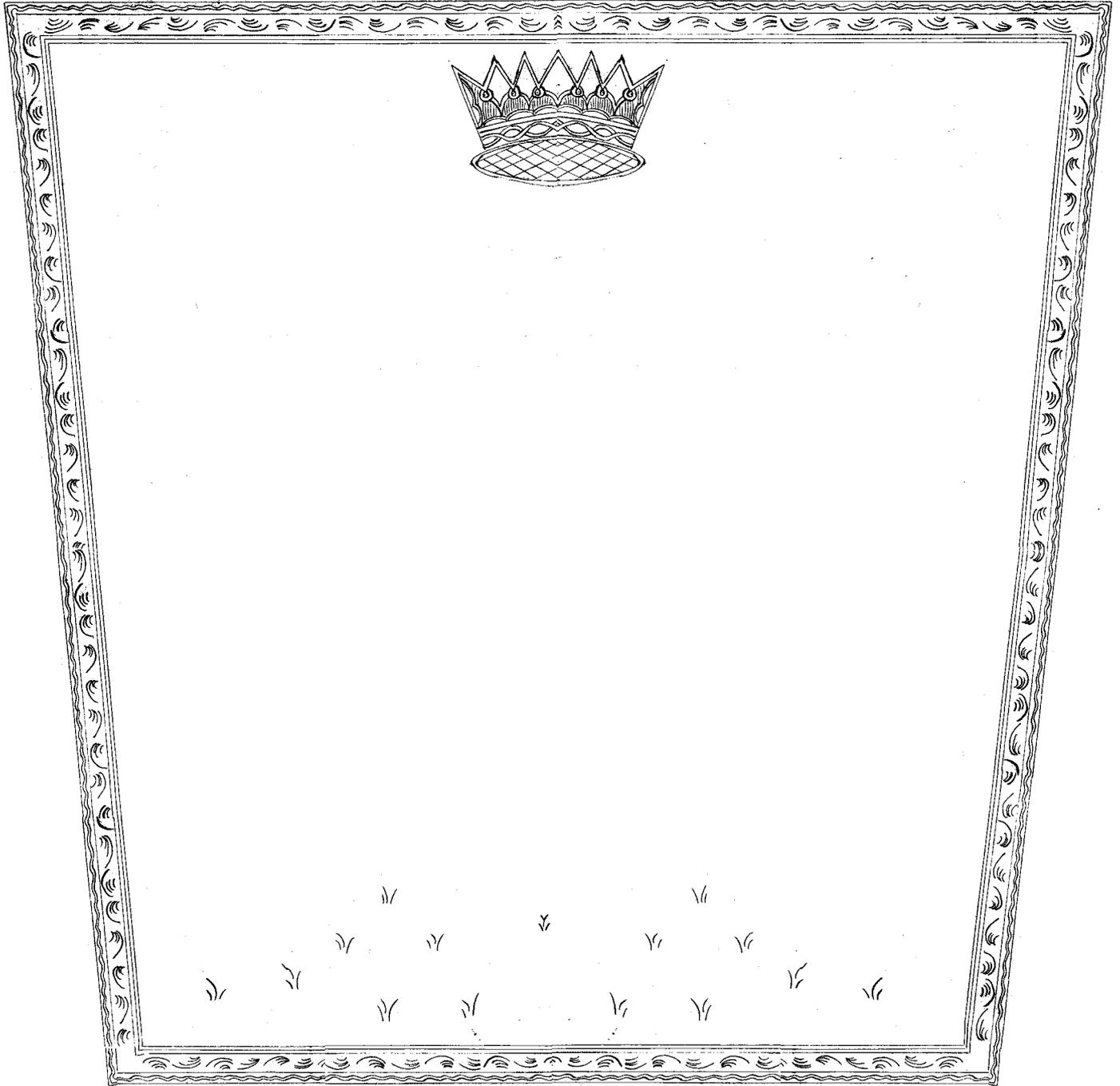
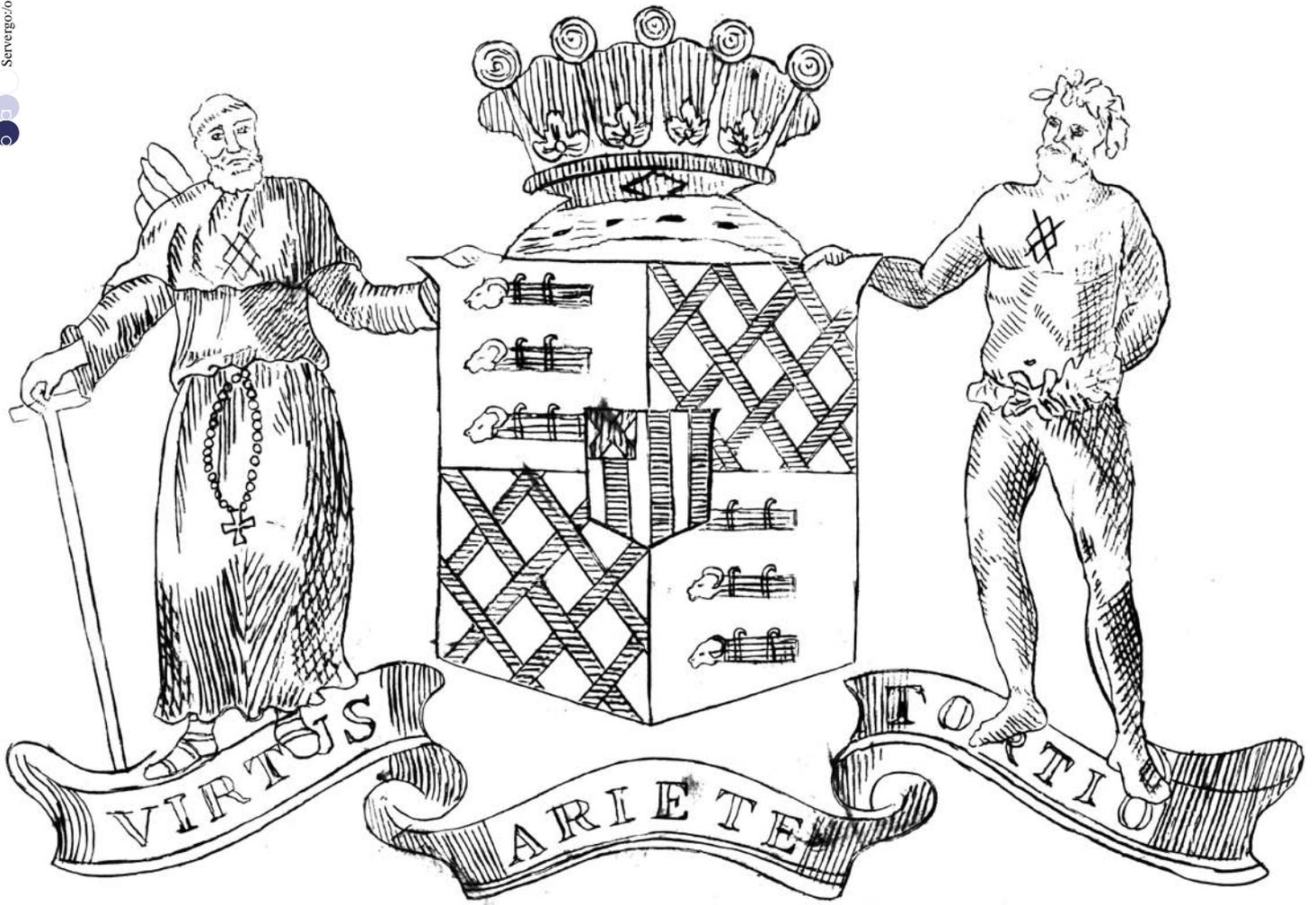


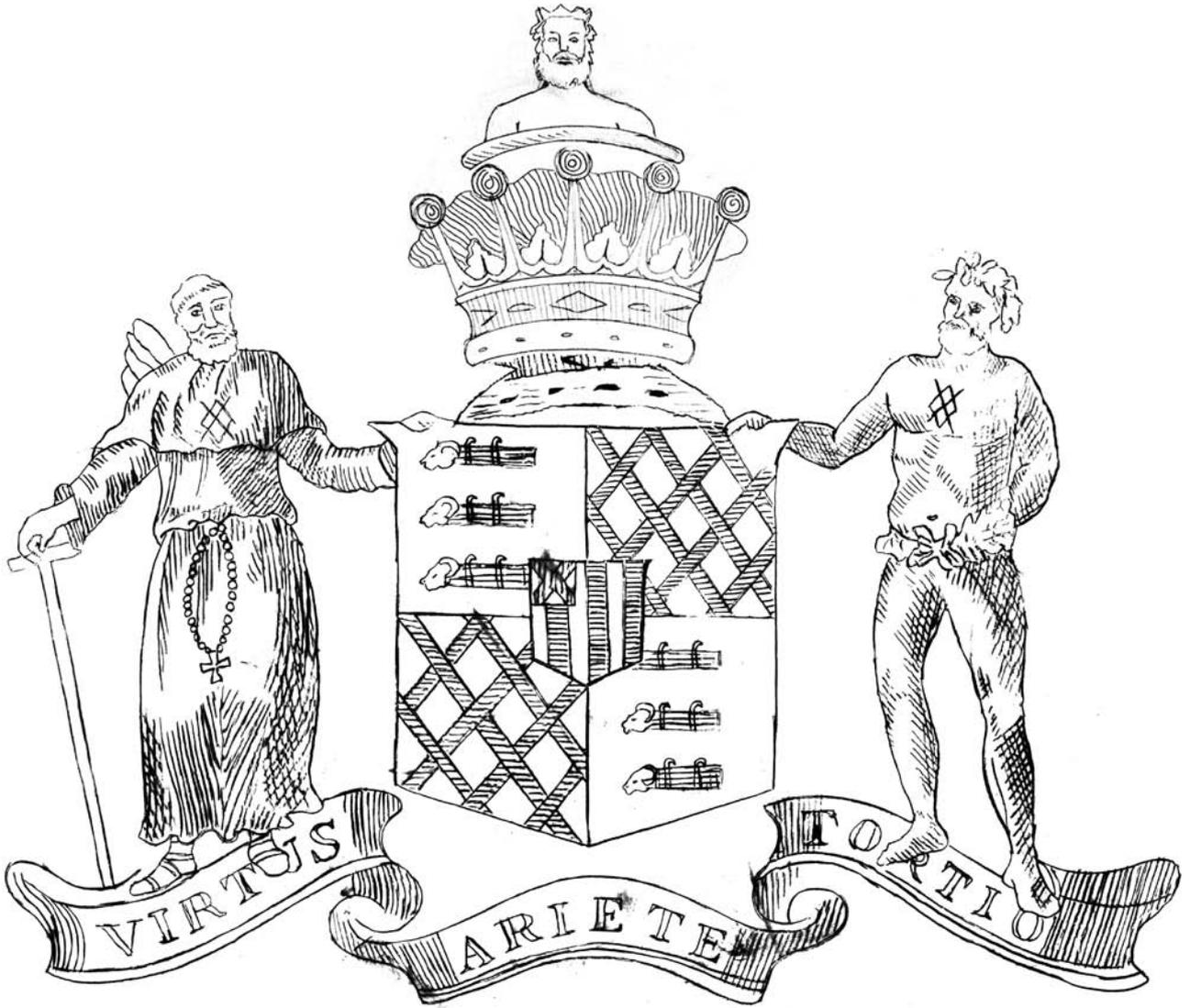
Plate 4: Detail on breastplate (60)

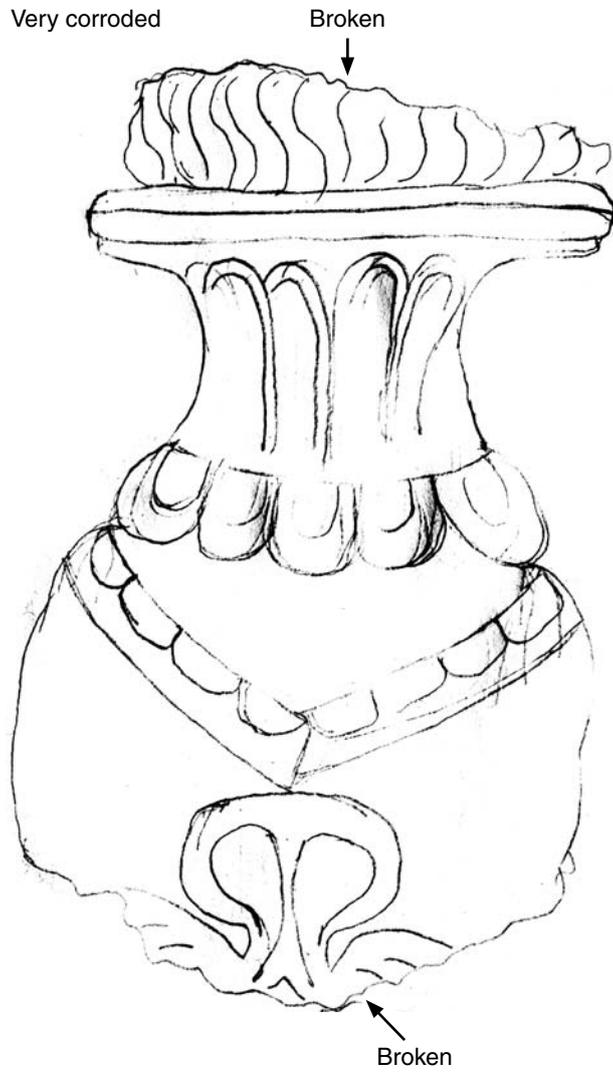


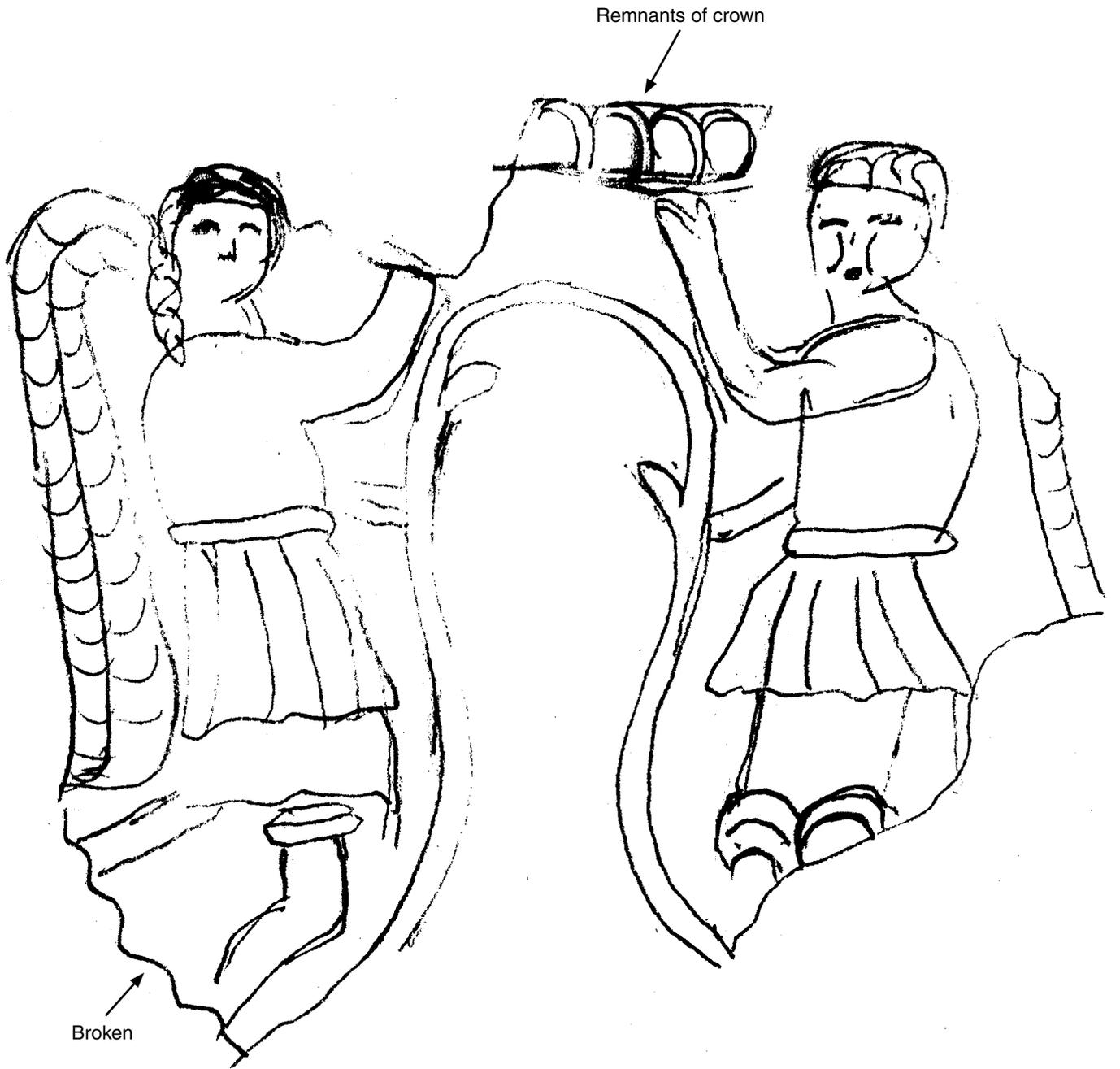


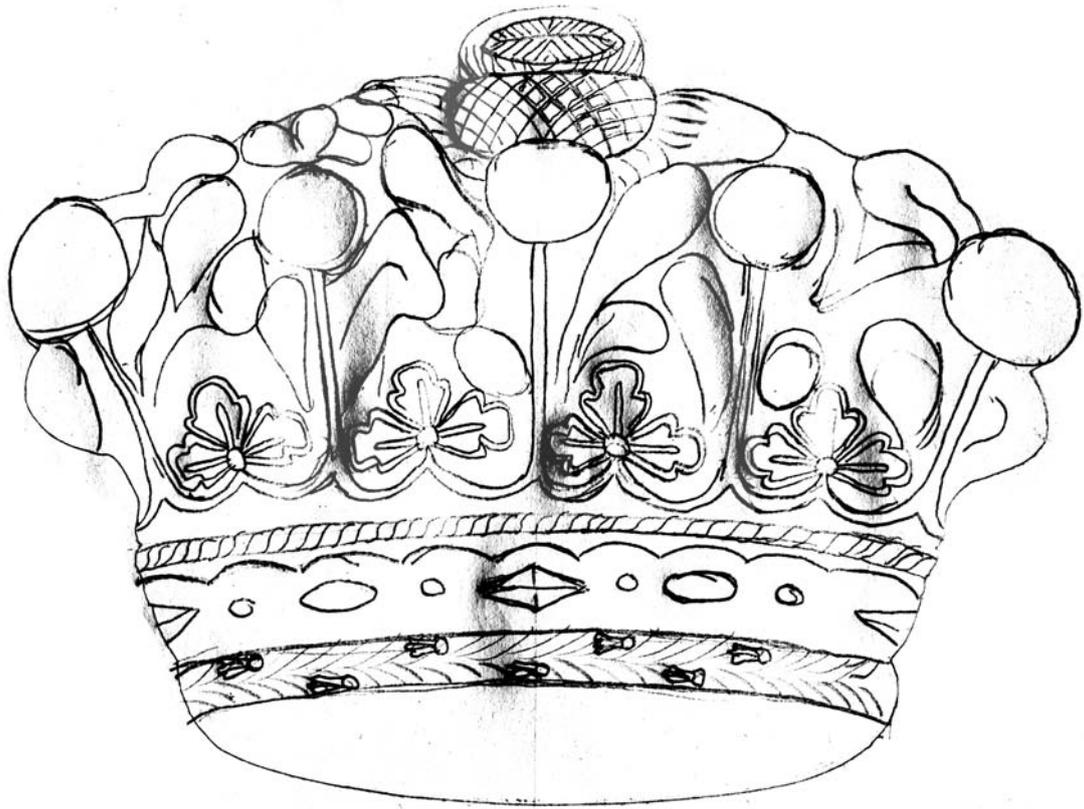


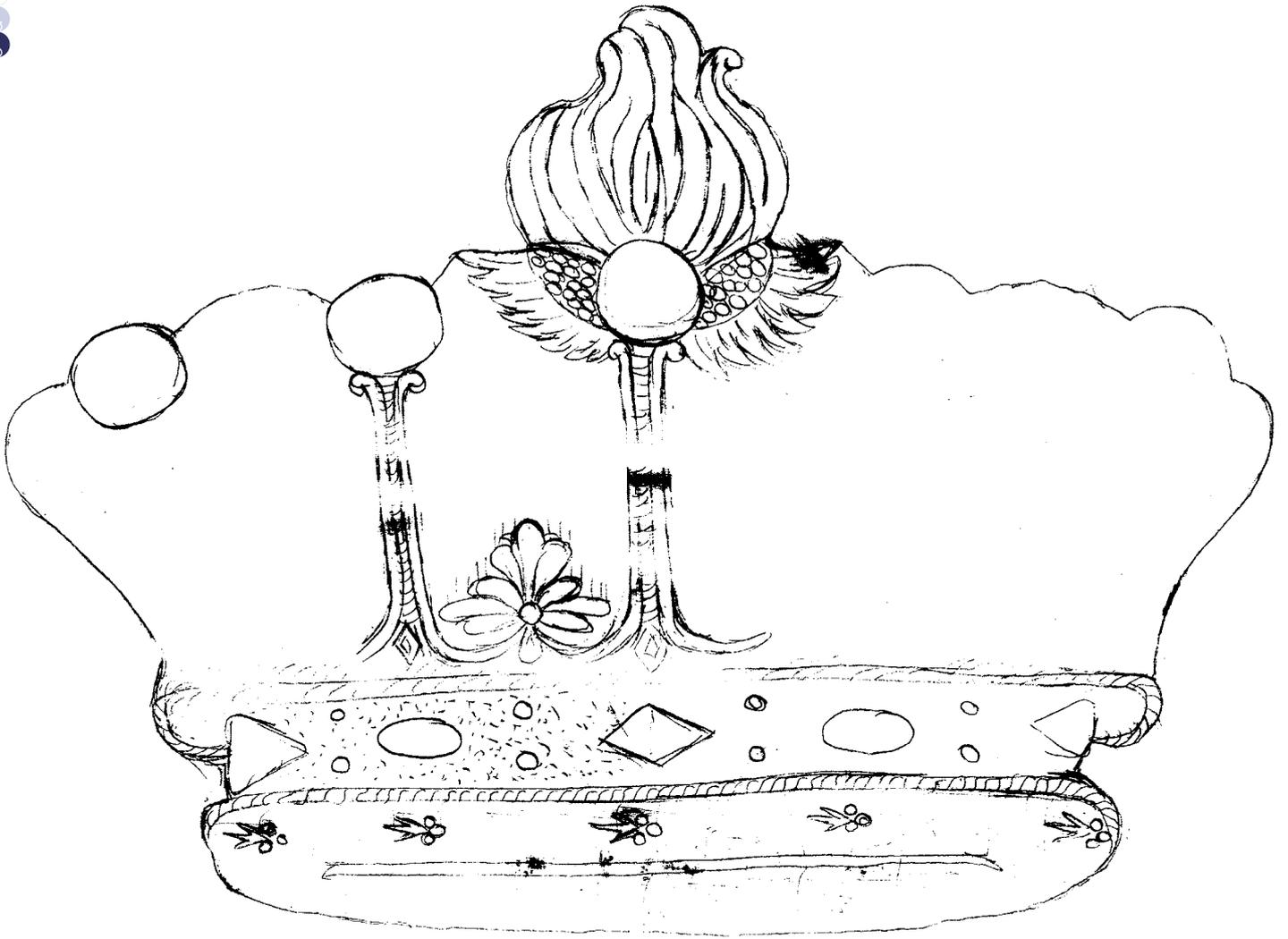












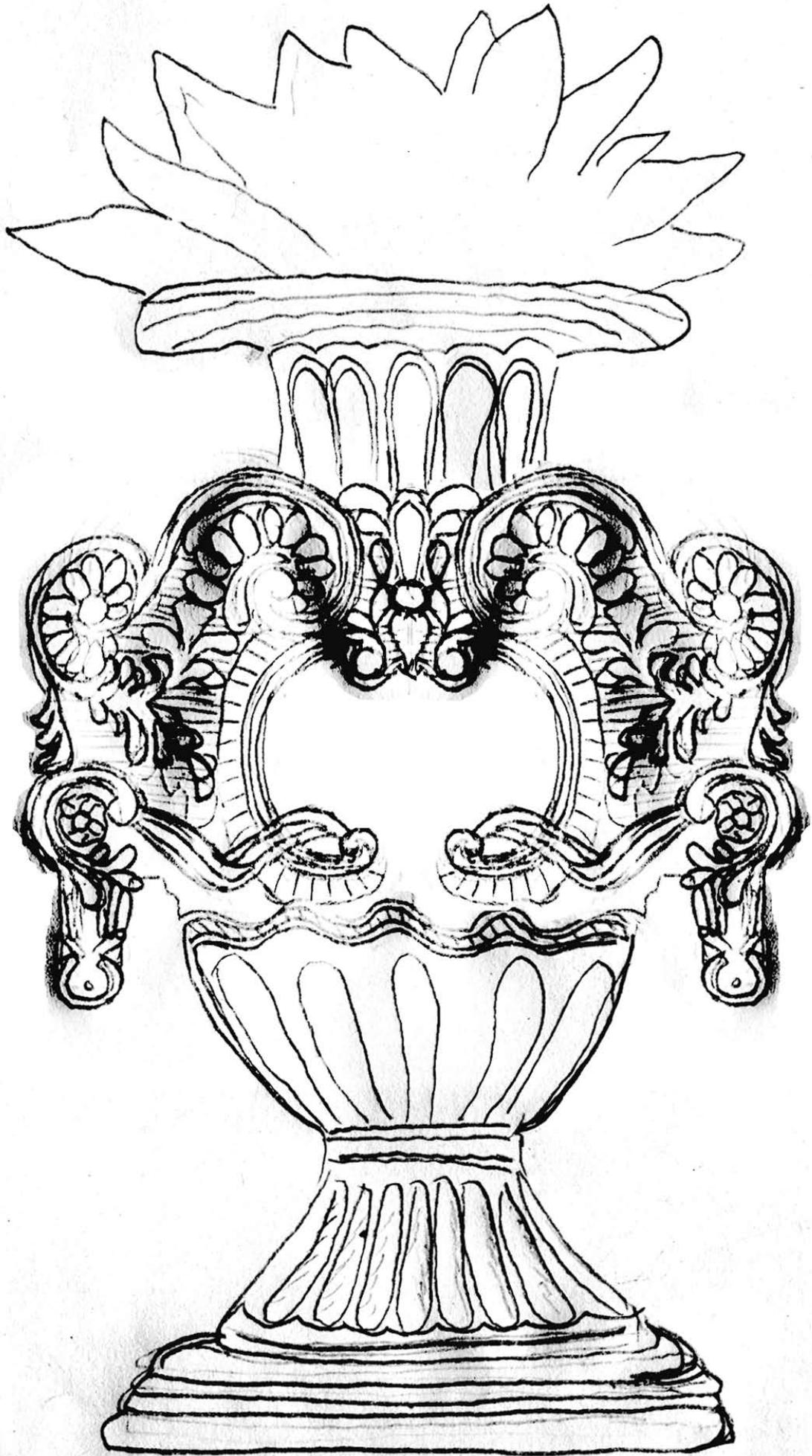
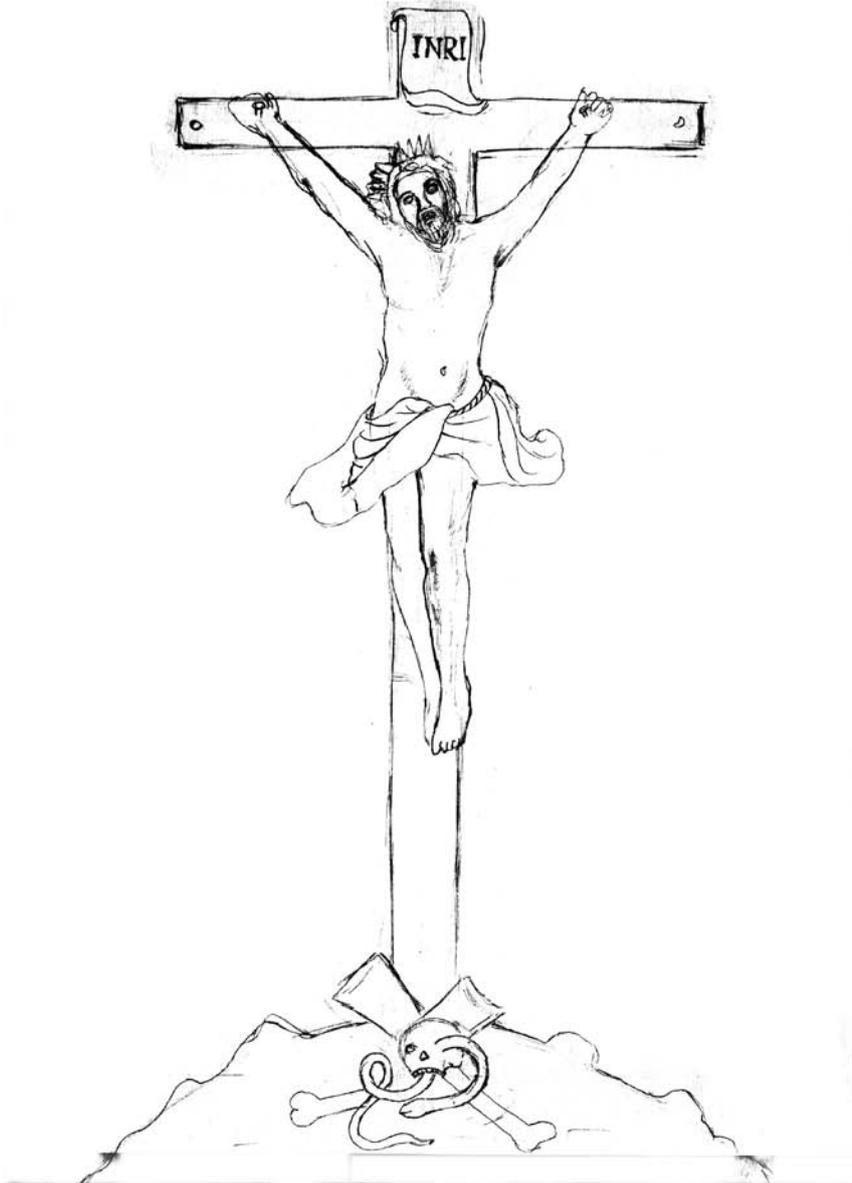
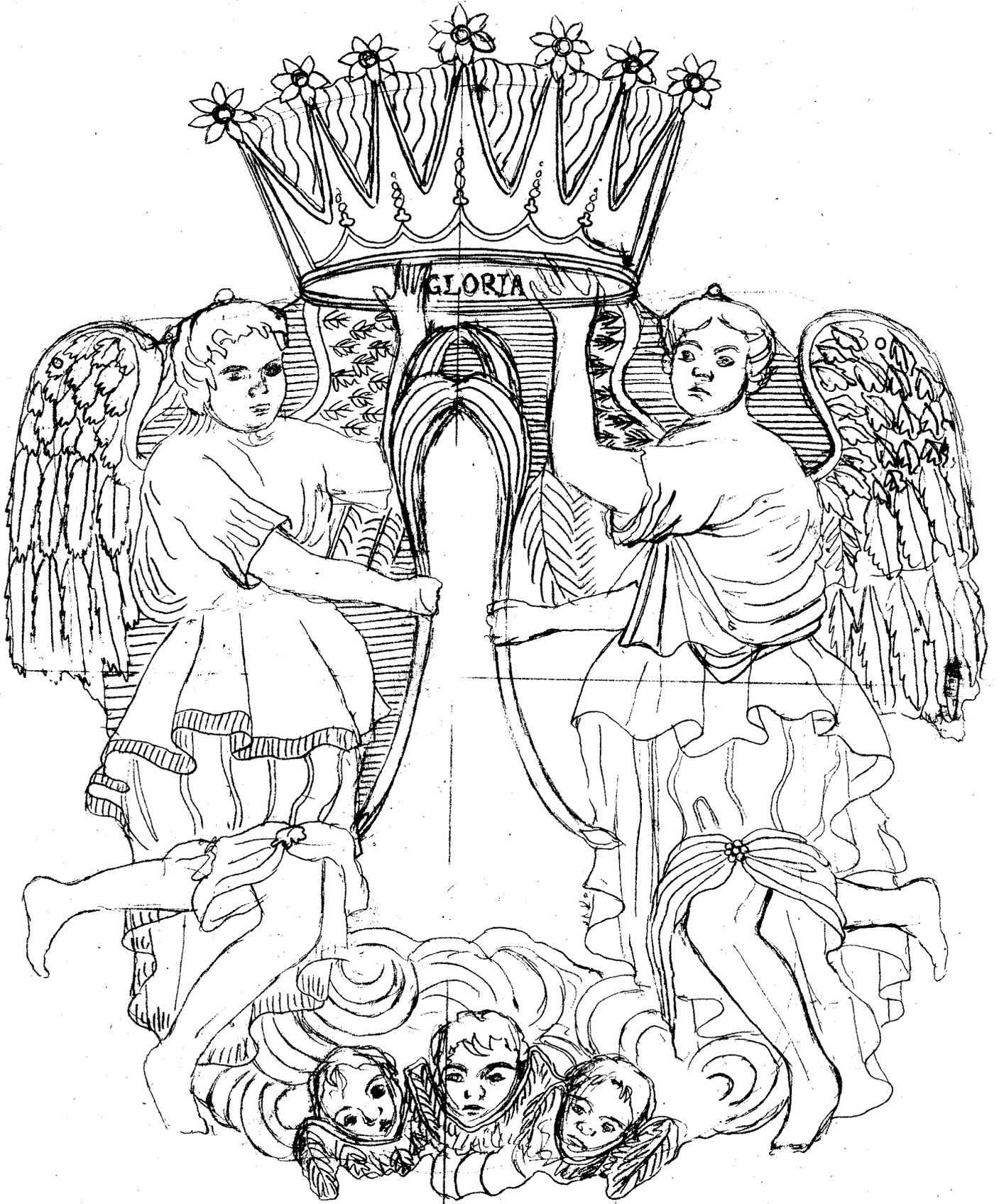
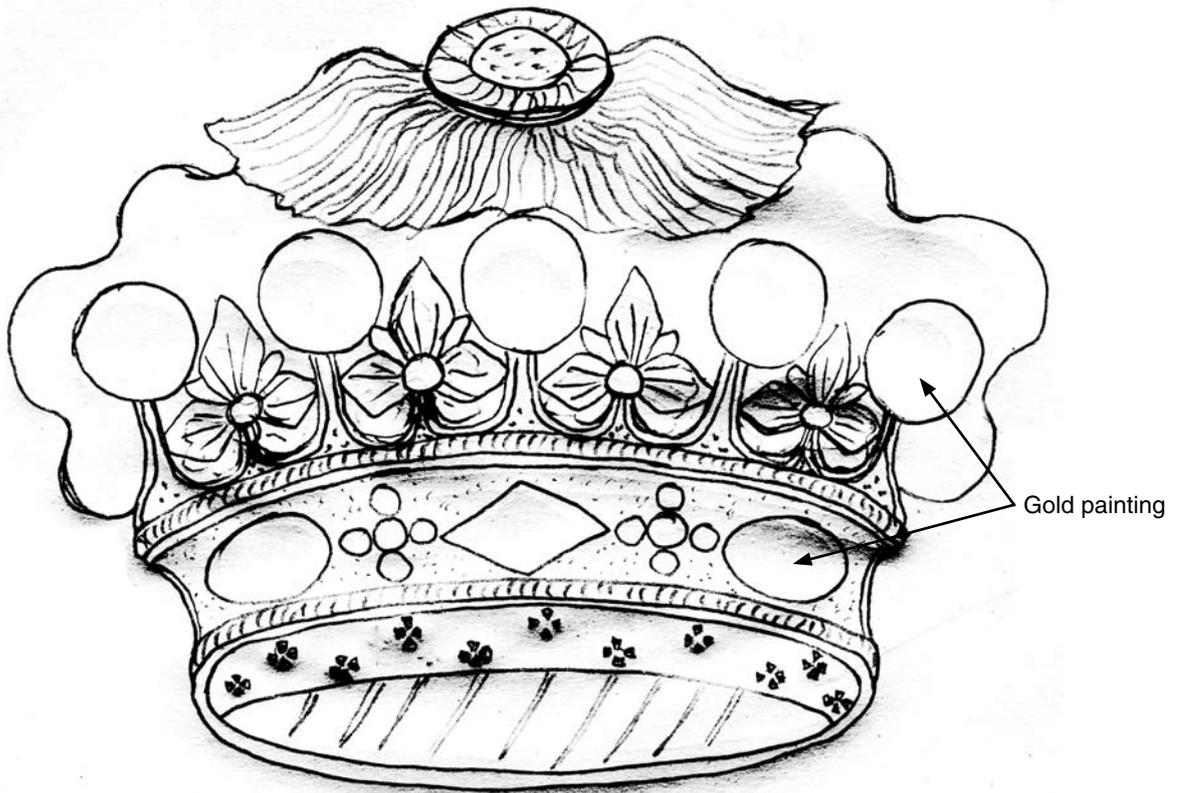


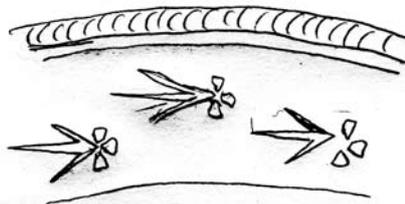
Plate 14: Lid motif (63)

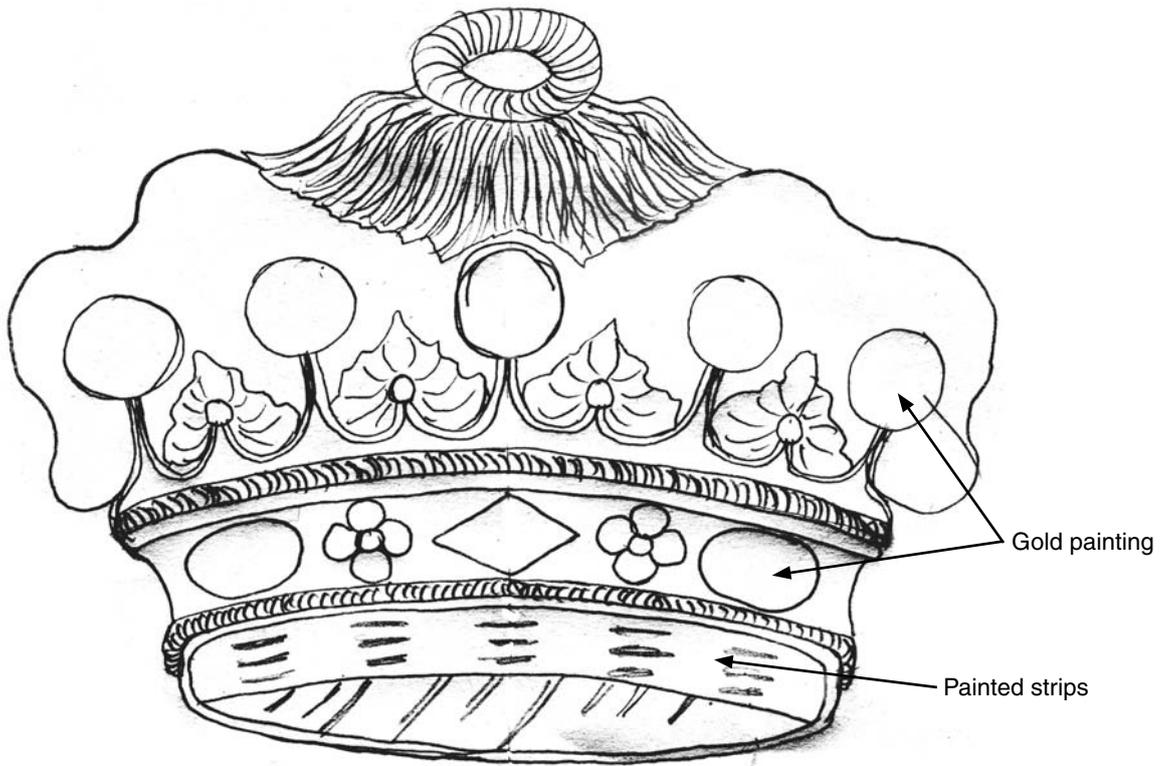






Detail on larger crown lining



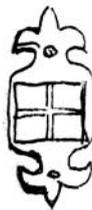




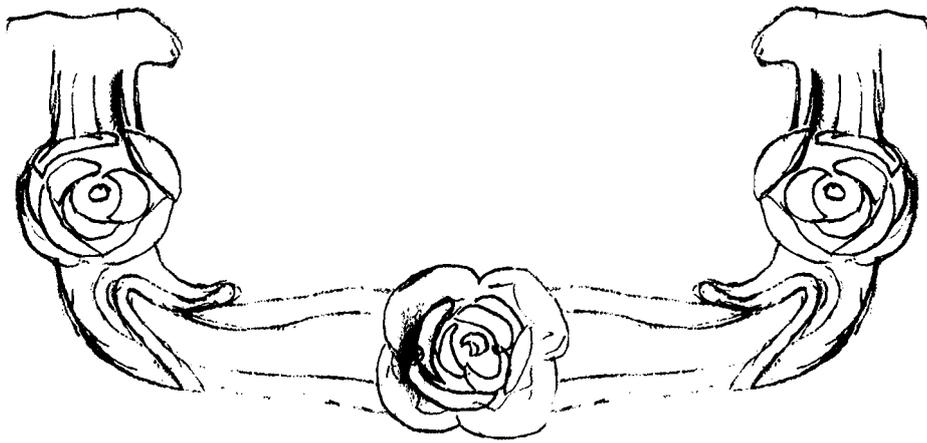
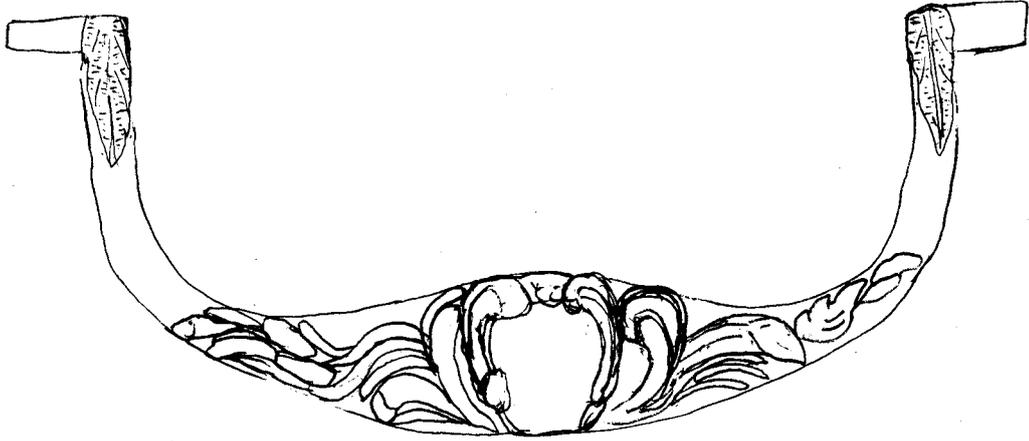
Escutcheon (72)

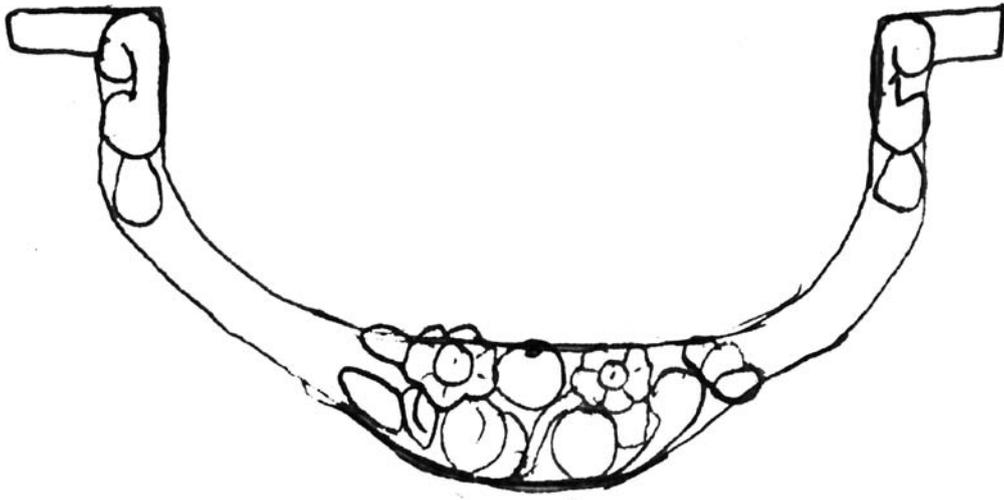
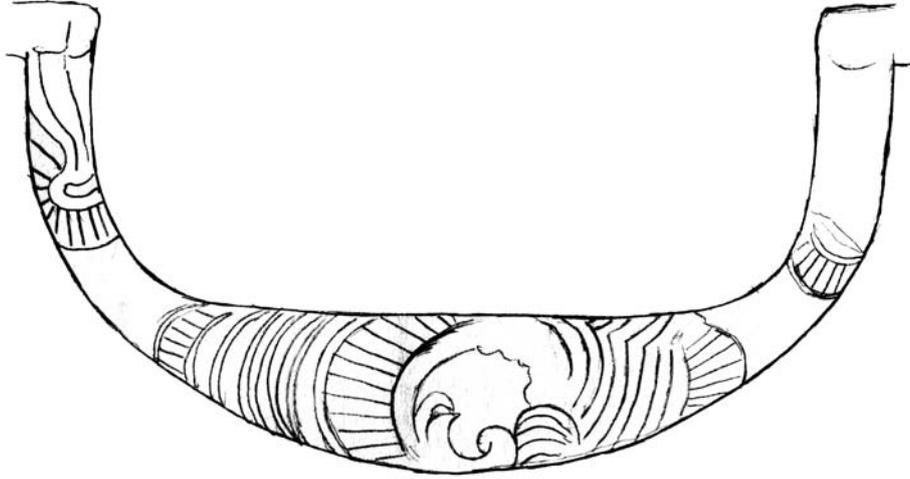


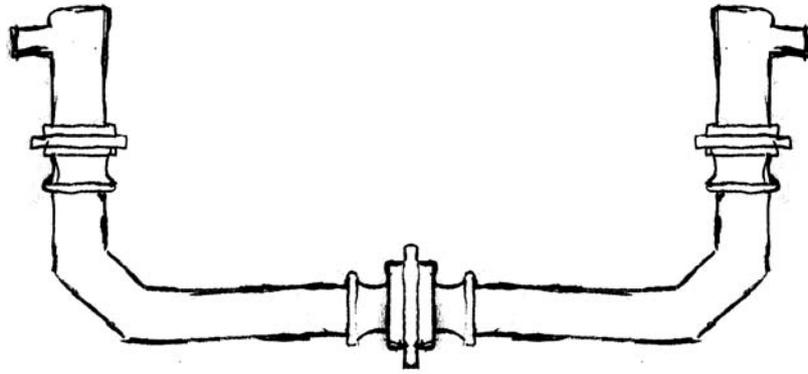
Escutcheon (64)



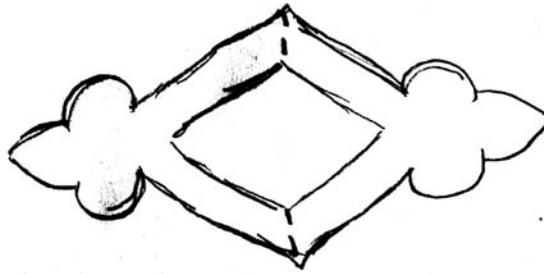
Escutcheon (53)



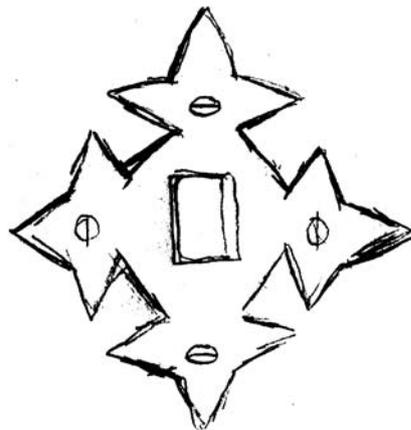




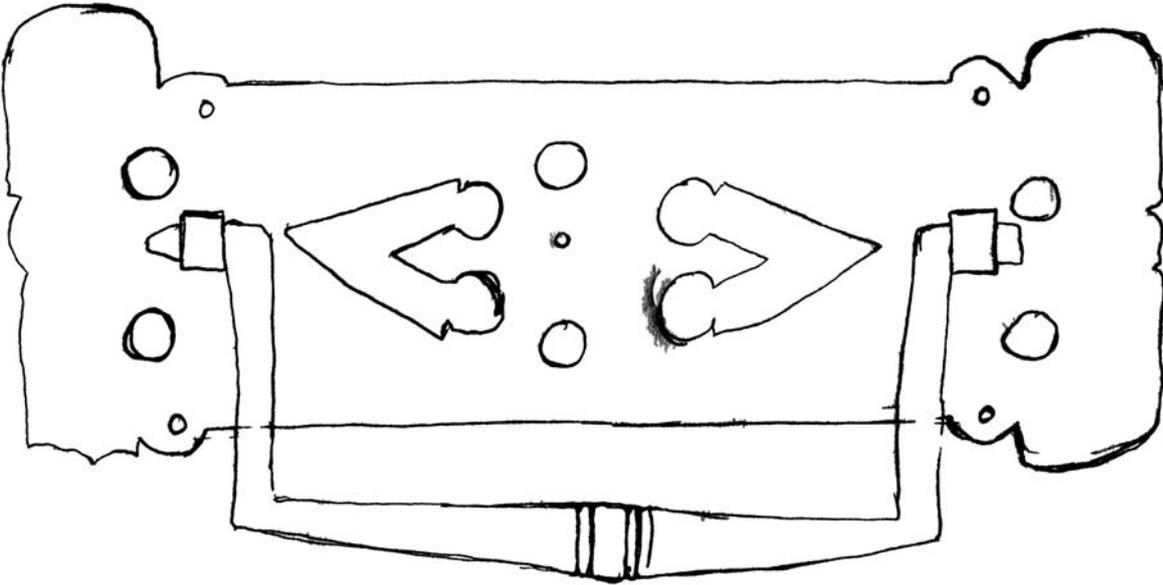
Grip

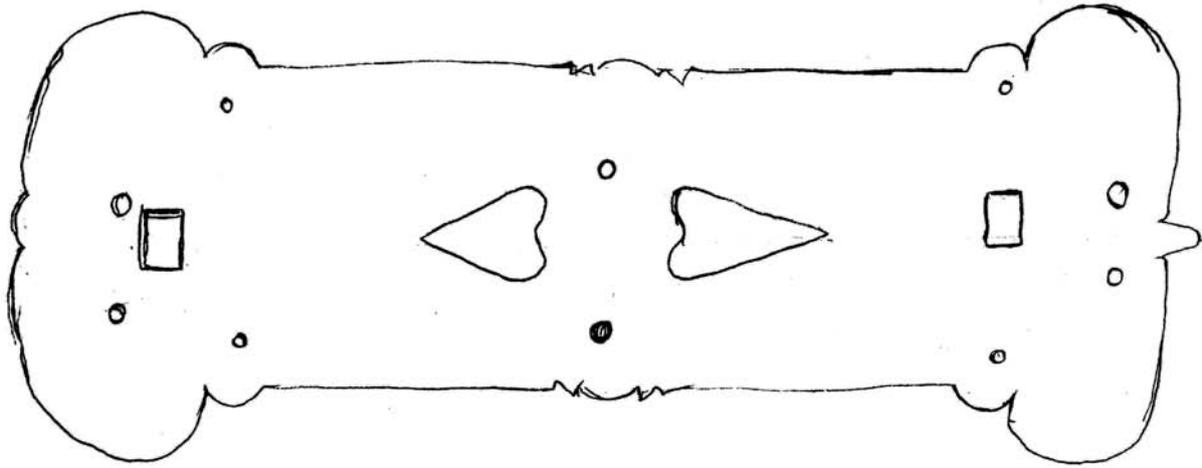


Hinge



Grip plate (53)





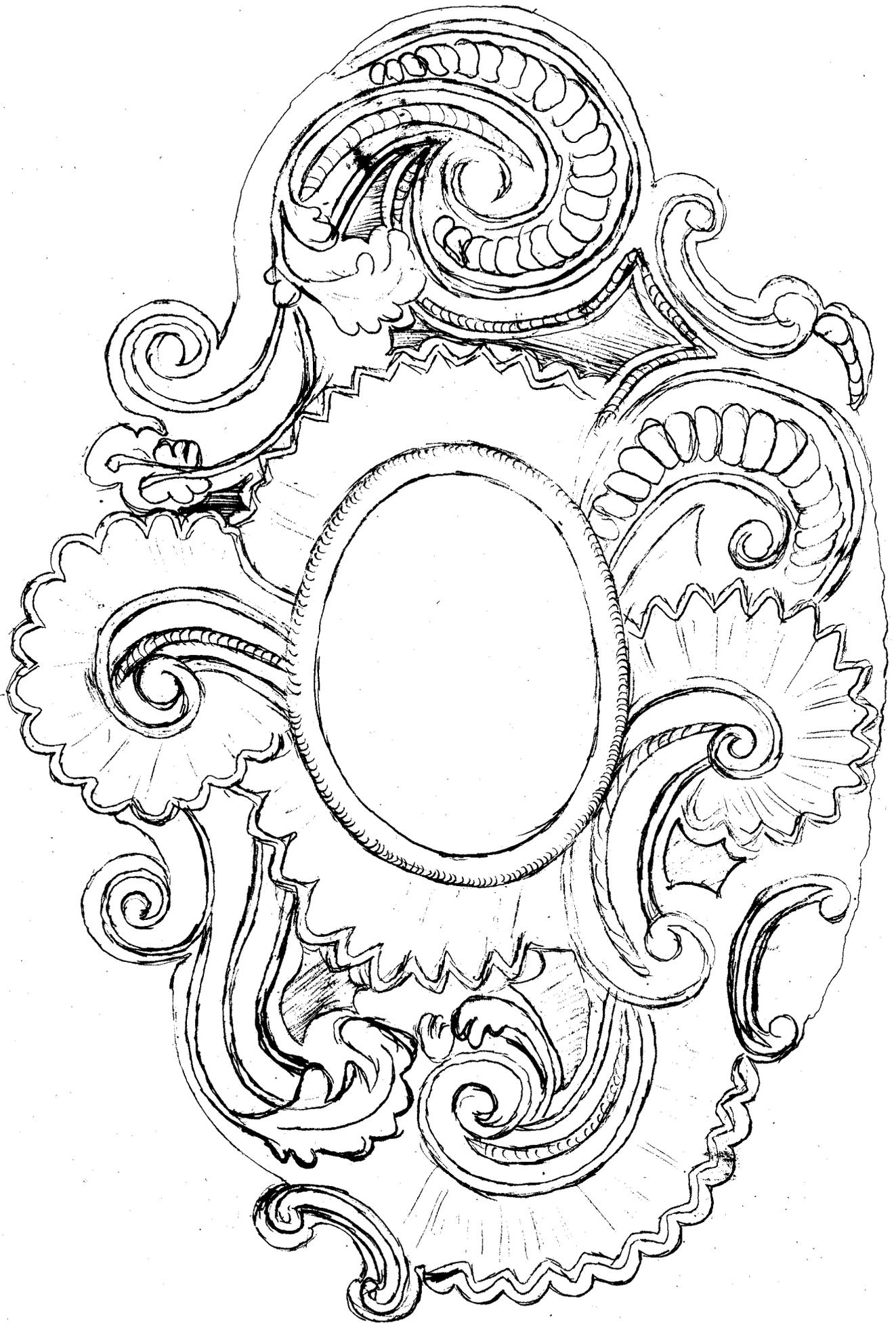
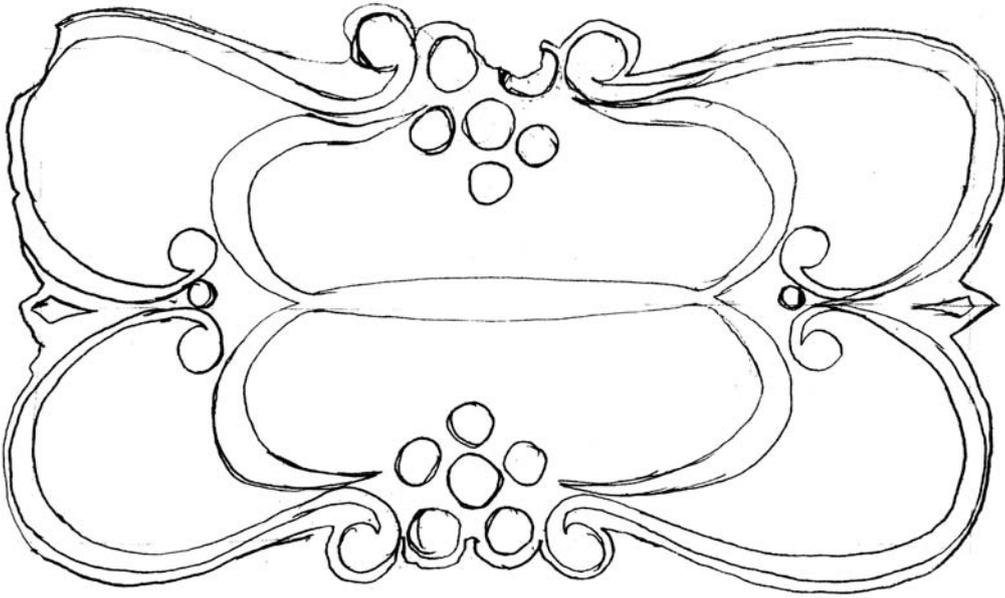


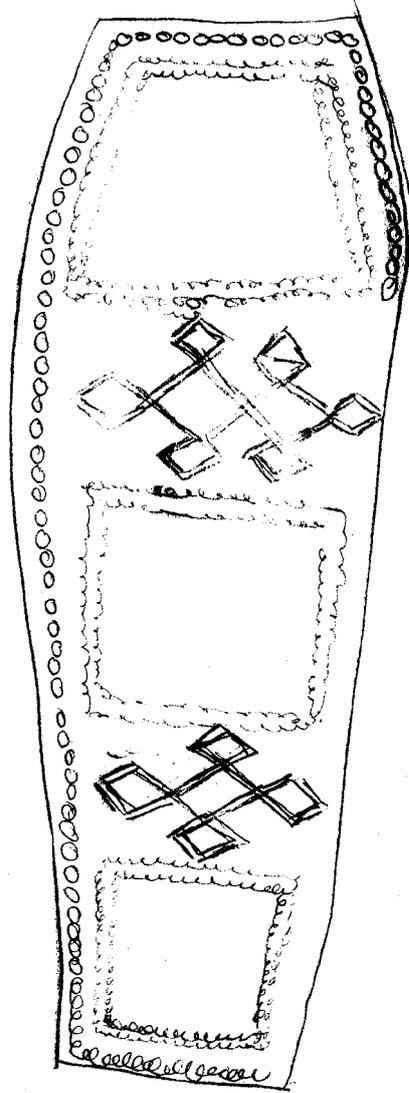
Plate 25: Grip plate (Unstratified)



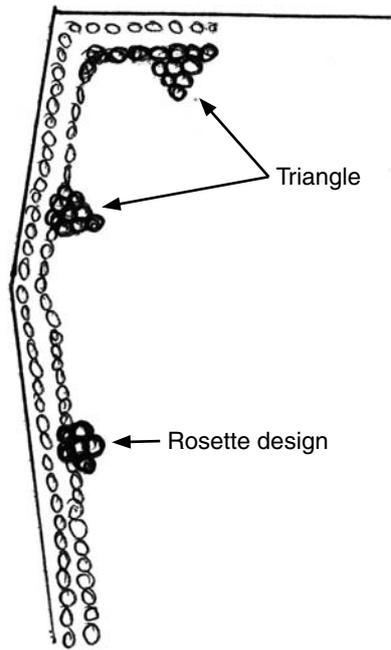




Upholstery stud pattern design

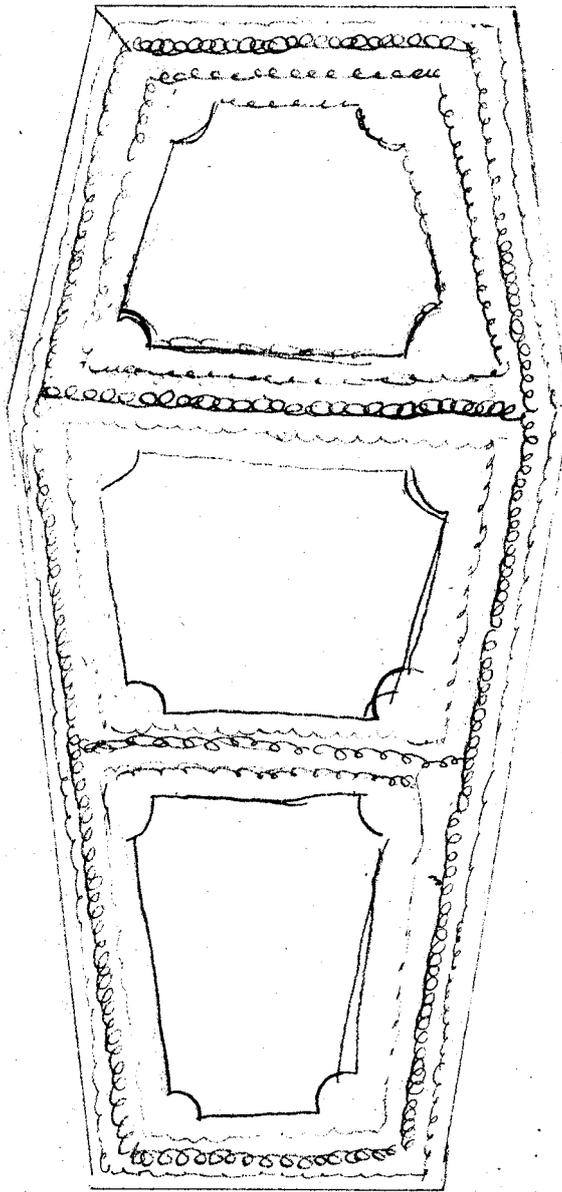


New upholstery pin design on lid.
Only fragment present.

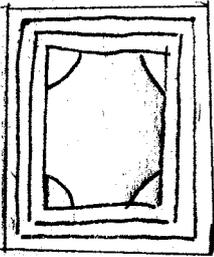


Upholstery stud design

Lid

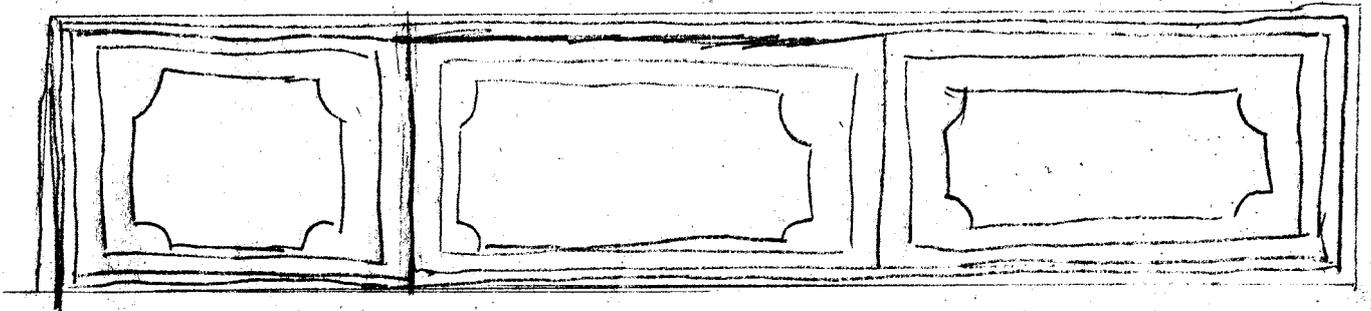


End panel



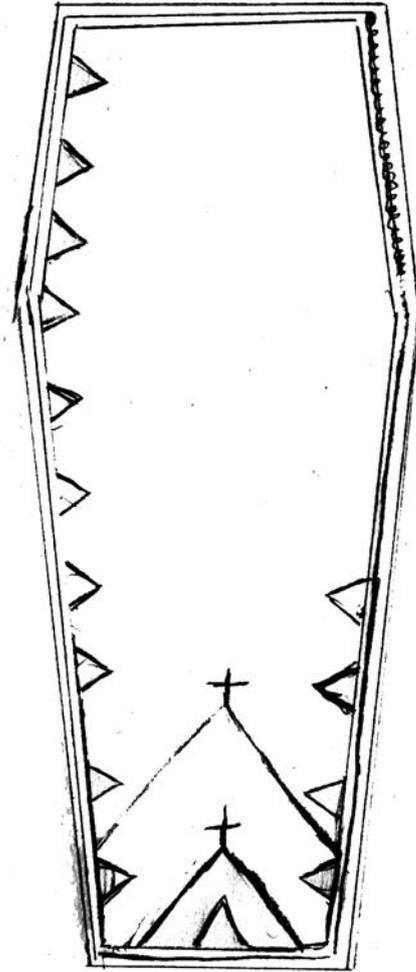
3 rows of studs.
Middle row large studs.

Side panel



Border - 3 rows of studs.
Middle one large studs.

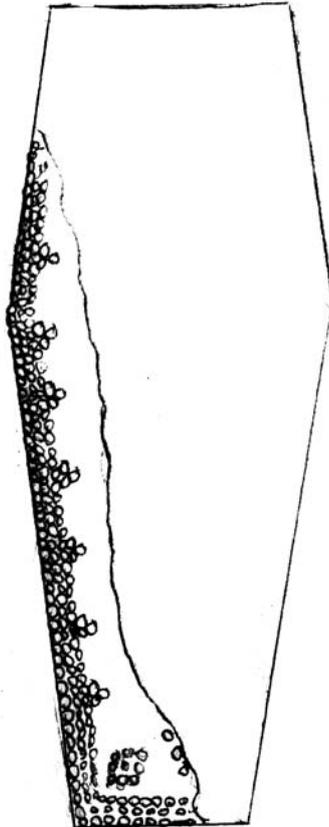
Upholstery stud design



2 rows of studs as solid border.
Triangles are infilled with studs



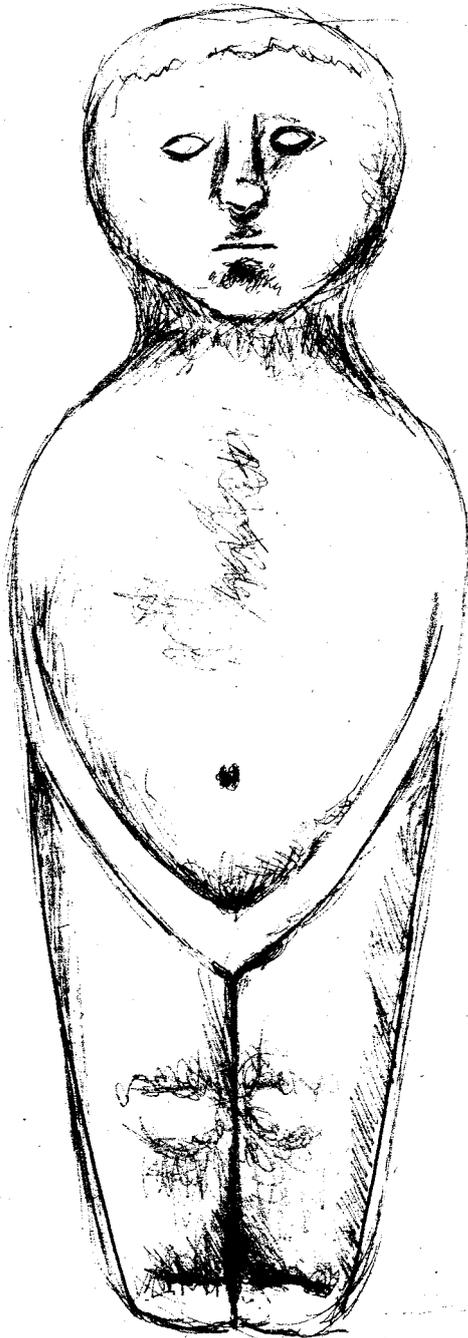
Upholstery stud design



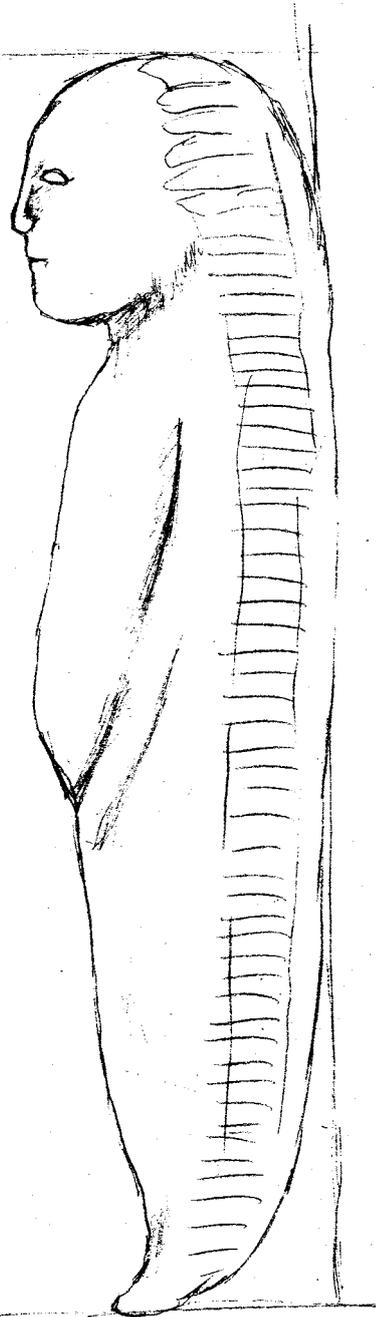
3 rows of studs.
Triangles made of 3 studs and
diamond shape in the corner



Appears to have been more
patterns on the lid but none
survived to the extent that they
could be clearly identified



Front



Side view



Plate 35: Coffins within the crypt looking east



Plate 36: Coffins on the south side of the crypt



Plate 37: Recording the coffins March 2004



Plate 38: Anthropoid coffin (75)

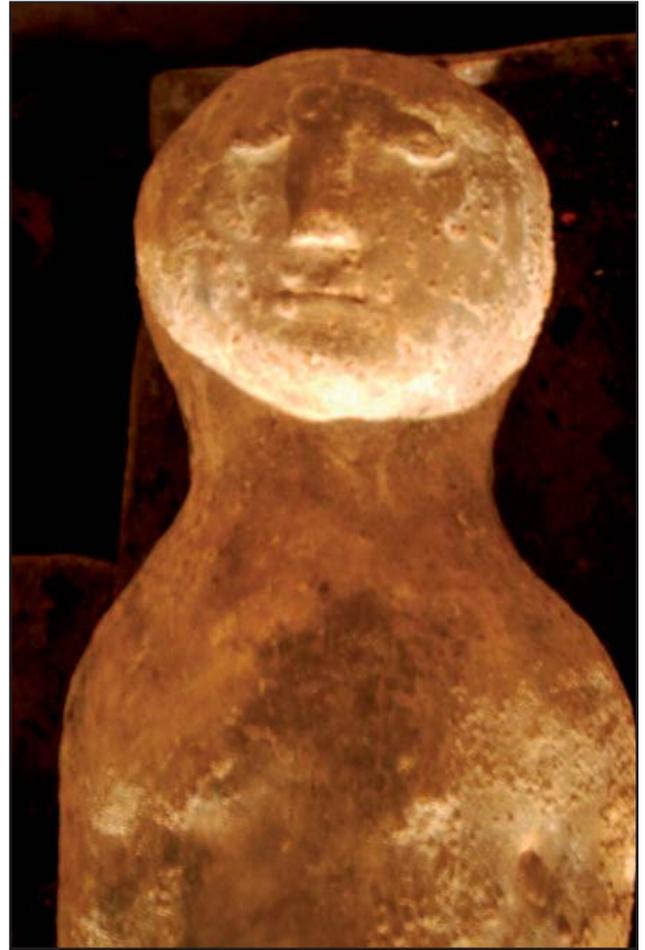


Plate 39: Close-up of the facial area of anthropoid coffin (75)



Plate 40: Coffin (59) showing the applied lettering of the inscription

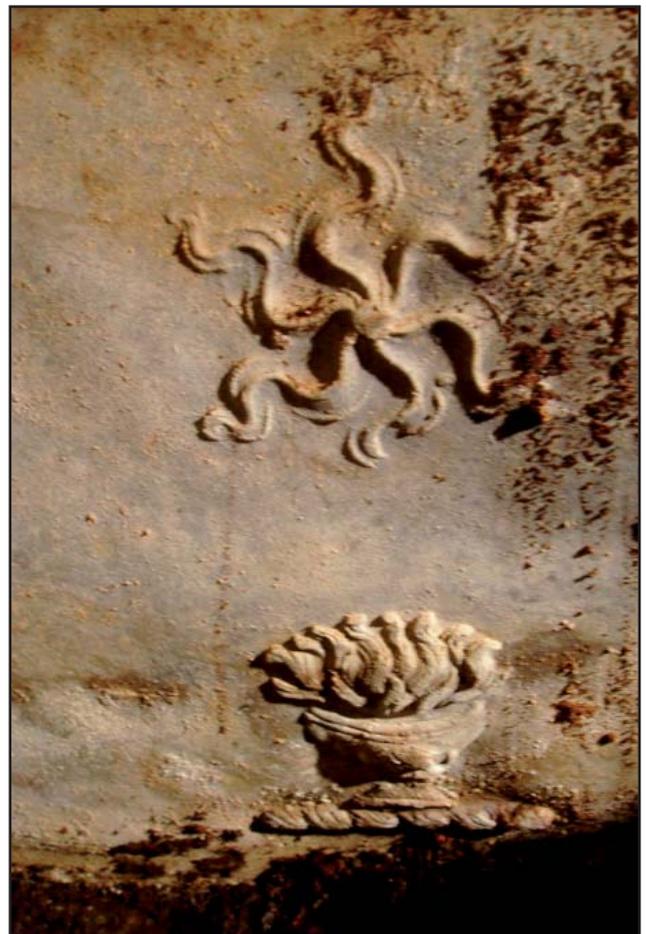


Plate 41: Detail of raised moulded motifs on the lid of coffin (59)



Plate 42: Coffin (59) showing applied lettering of the inscription



Plate 43: Coffin (71) showing a full suite of coffin fittings, including an breastplate, lid



Plate 44: Brass breastplate of coffin (71) showing crest

Plate 45: Lid motif of coffin (71)



Plate 46: Grip and grip plate of coffin (68)



Plate 47: Grip plate of coffin (64) composed of CCS 3 and a crown lid motif



Plate 48: Grip plate of coffin (72) composed of a grip plate and a crown lid motif



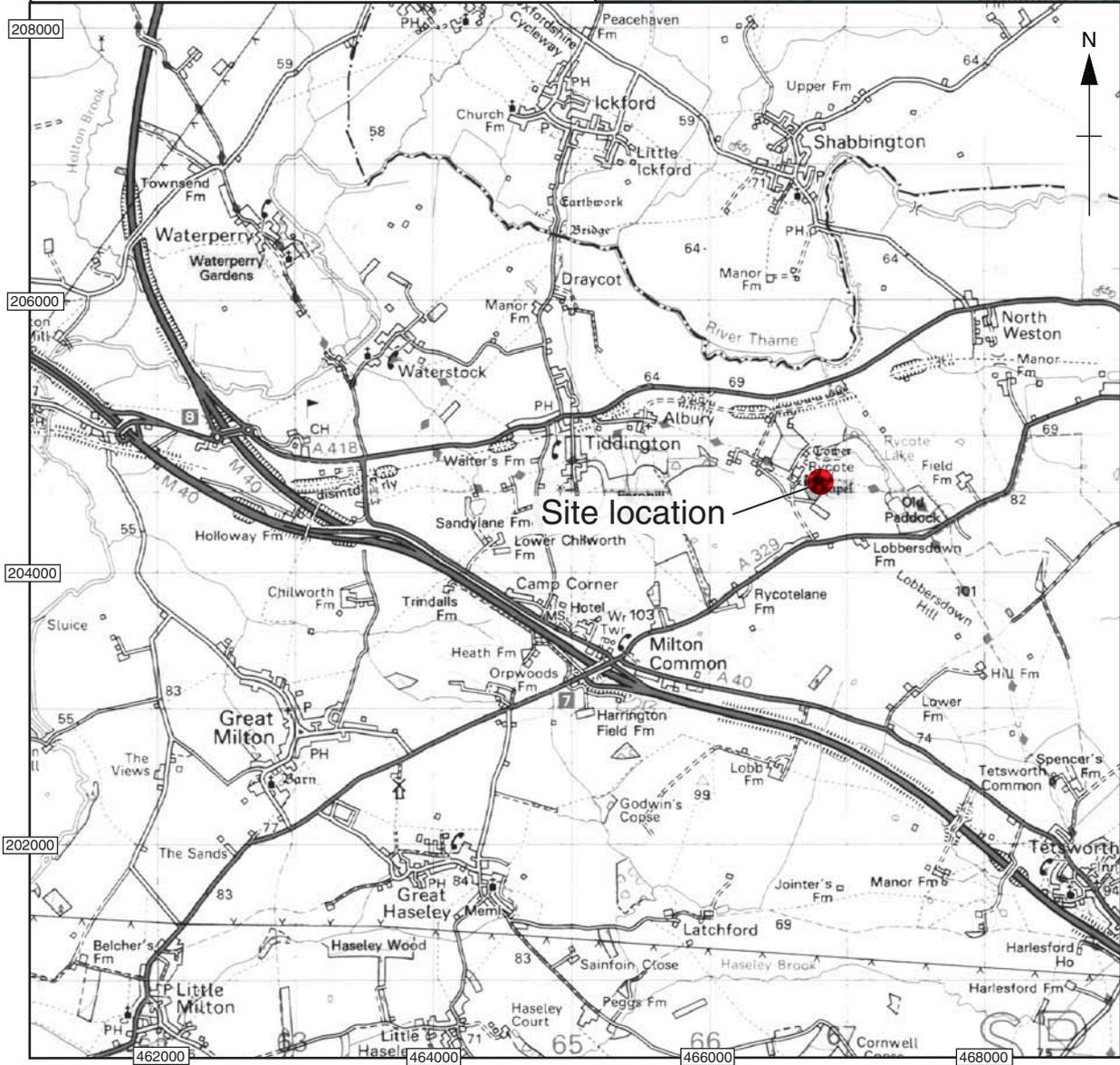
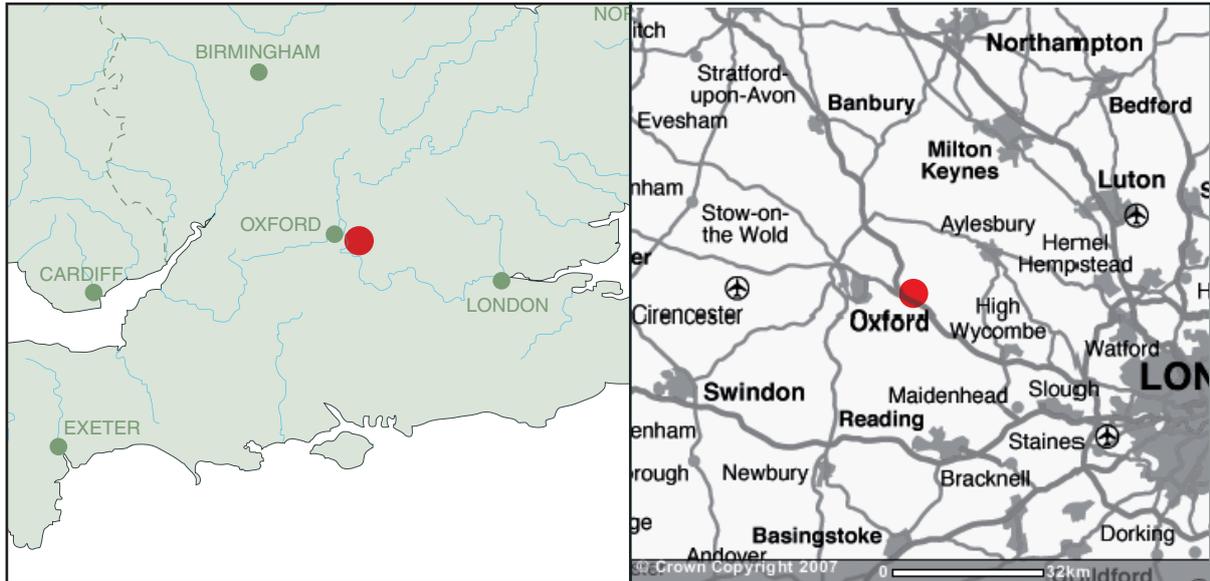
Plate 49: Ormolou grip of coffin (56)



Plate 50: Ormolou grip of coffin (57)

APPENDIX 7 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**Site name:** Rycote Chapel Crypt**Site code:** RYCOTE04**Grid reference:** SU 55337 86194**Type of watching brief:** Coffin recording**Date and duration of project:** March 2004**Summary of results:** Twenty-four coffins of the Bertie family (Earls of Abingdon and Barons Norreys of Rycote) were recorded in the small private crypt beneath the chancel of Rycote Chapel. They dated between 1648 and 1884. The coffins are remarkable for the wealth of coffin fittings, many displaying new types. Breastplate inscriptions identified the names of the deceased in all but one case.**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2002.52

servergo/RioZ/RYCOTBUR/ RycoteChapel/jm/04.12.07



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Figure 1: Site location

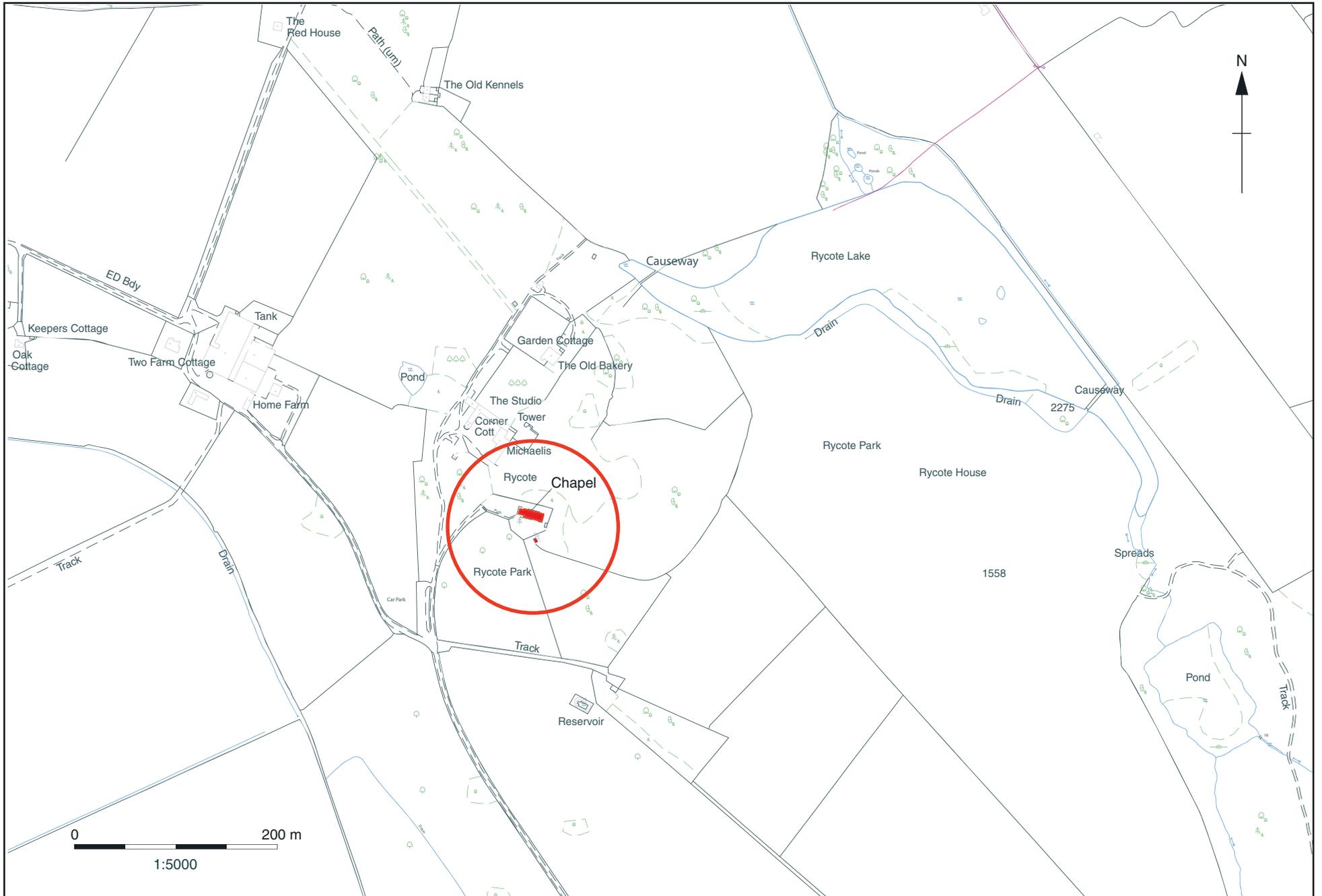


Figure 2: Site plan of area of watching brief

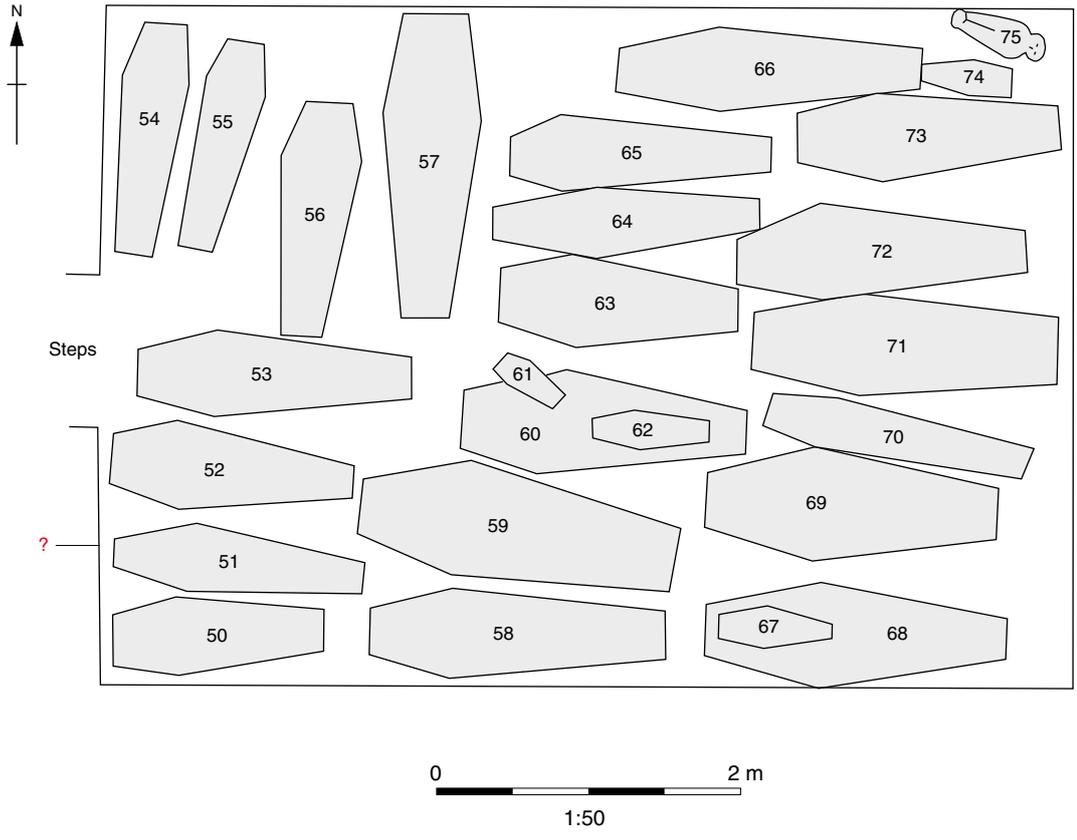


Figure 3: Distribution of coffins within the crypt

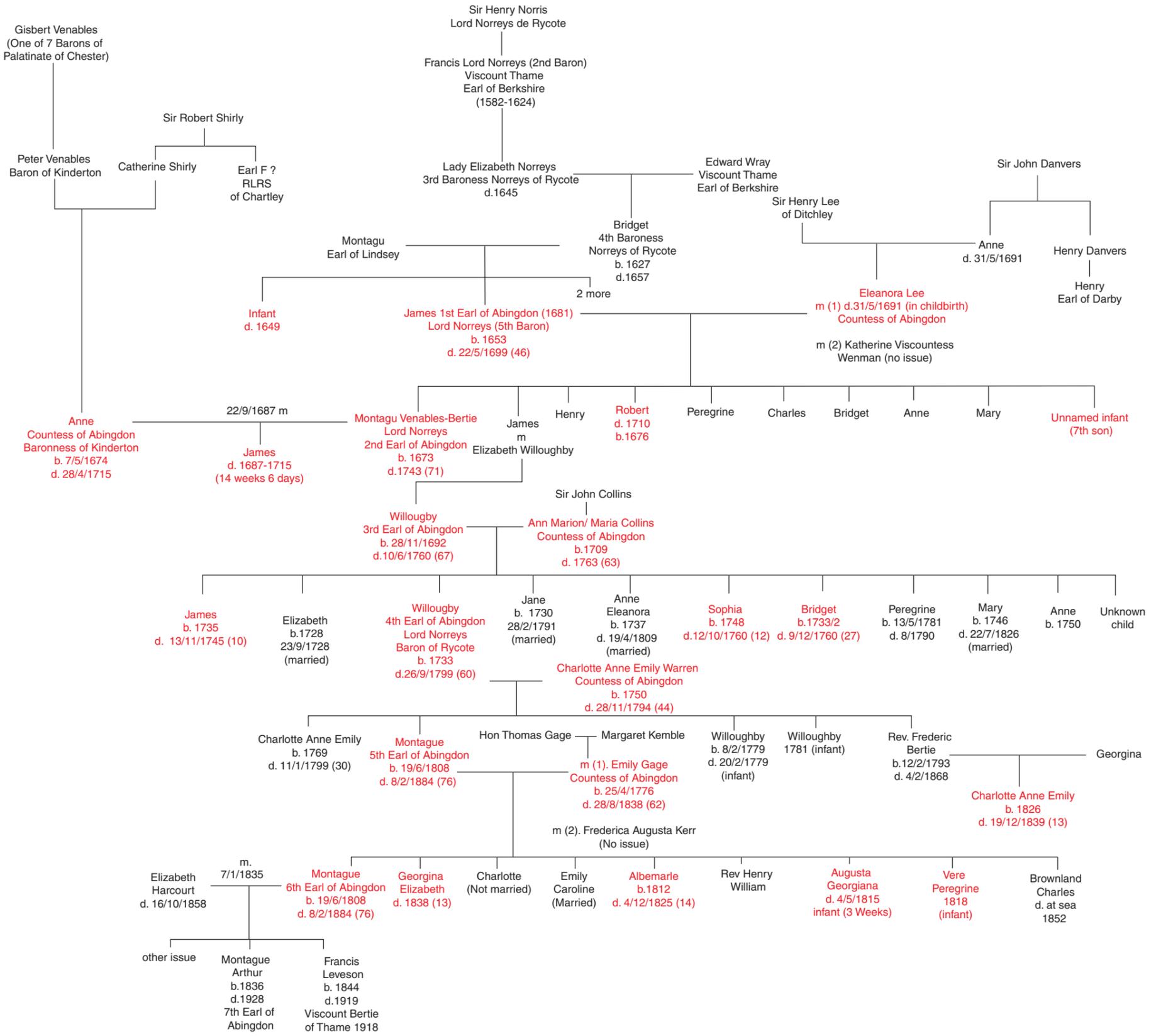


Figure 4: Family tree of the Earls of Abingdon, and Lord Norreys of Rycote. (The names in red indicate those individuals interred within the crypt)



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.thehumanjourney.net



Oxford Archaeology North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: (0044) 01524 541000
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.thehumanjourney.net



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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