

MEDIEVAL STAINED GLASS FRAGMENTS

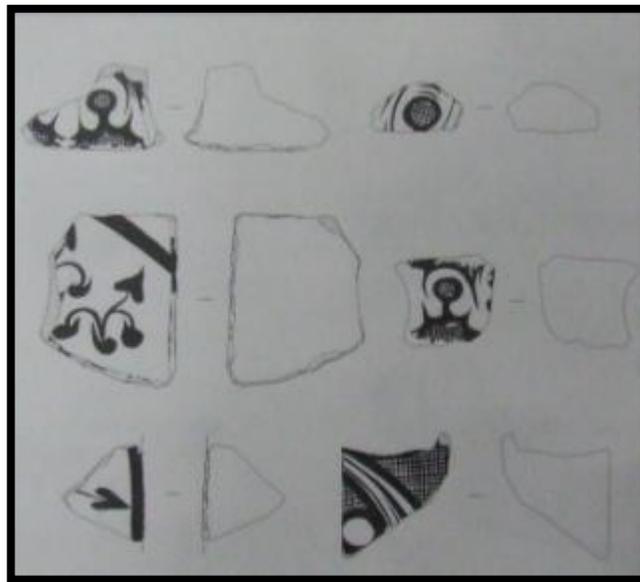
FROM

FORMER COUNTY GARAGE

PRIORY AVENUE

TAUNTON

SOMERSET



A COMPARISON WITH THE MEDIEVAL GLASS

OF

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

Salisbury Cathedral

The ancient glass at Salisbury dates from c1220 to c1266 starting with the Trinity Chapel and finishing with the completion of the Chapter House. There are few records of the glass in its original configuration but it is assumed that the Trinity Chapel and eastern choir aisles are likely to have contained figurative glazing or grisaille containing medallions, most of the remaining body of the church being filled with grisaille or plain quarry glazing.

Very little of the figurative glass remains in the building today and this comprises of, part of the Tree of Jesse, a few panels from the tracery of the Chapter House and a small number of medallion panels. The remaining Medieval glass (of which there is a considerable amount) comprise of 17 different grisaille patterns, some from the main body of the building and a few from the Chapter House. None of this ancient glass is thought to be in its original position and is likely to have been moved a number of times, especially in the last 100 years.

During the 18th century restoration by the architect Wyatt, there was wholesale removal of Medieval glass from the building, most of which is recorded as being smashed and dumped in the town ditch by the cart load.

There are a number of references in the Cathedral archive to glass being collected by various individuals at this time, and glass from Salisbury can now be found in, Winchester Cathedral, Boyton and Laverstock in Wiltshire, Grately in Hampshire, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and several museums in America. This glass accounts for a very small amount of the glass removed and destroyed in the 18th century.

The loss of Medieval glass continued and was still taking place in 1846 when Charles Winston made his visit to Salisbury to document the ancient glass. He describes glass in the building and in the glaziers workshop that appear to have been lost as well. It was only following this documentation of the glass that a greater respect for the ancient glass seems to have been reached and restoration of what remained given greater consideration.

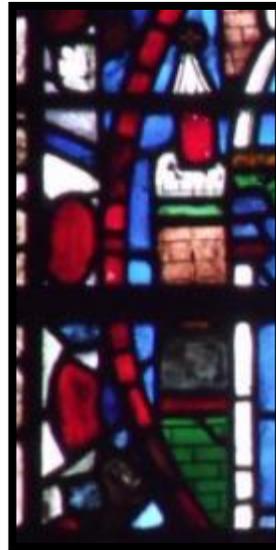
Taunton Priory Glass

Much of the glass we have seen is of the period covered by the construction of Salisbury Cathedral. The design of the grisaille glass follows much of the general character of the Salisbury glass and some sections of the glass bear a striking resemblance to glass from the Chapter House.

This is most easily demonstrated by the brickwork pattern found on the stylised buildings of the main Chapter House, Bishop and King Panel. Although there is a good comparison of style with these pieces the scale of the pieces differs considerably.



Taunton glass



Salisbury Chapter House



Salisbury Cathedral, Chapter House, Bishop and King Panel, c1266

If compared with the Salisbury glass, the sections of grisaille glass that are usually the pieces that comprise of the deeper colours rather than the tints, display the same problem with scale and also with the amount of glass paint on each piece.

These coloured sections at Salisbury, for the most part are painted to give the greatest amount of light through the glass, but many of the Taunton sections are more heavily painted.



Selection of Taunton pieces

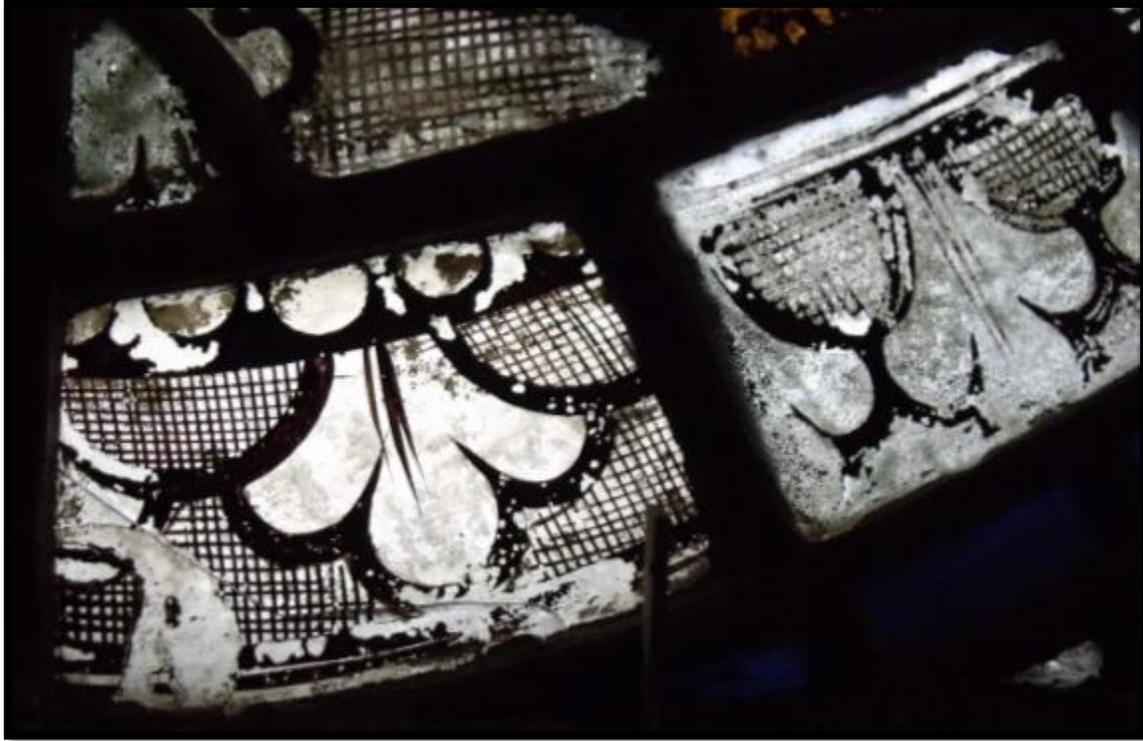


Selection of Salisbury Pieces

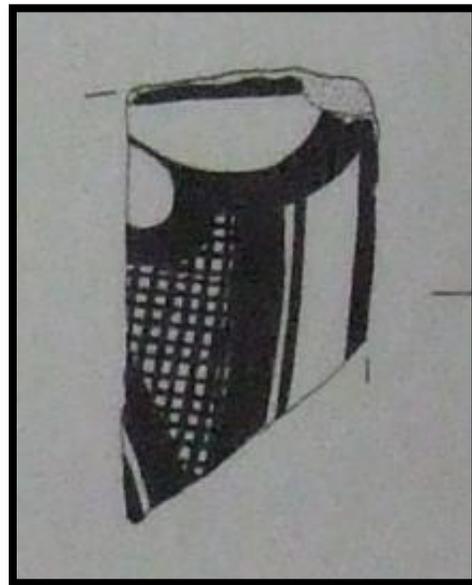
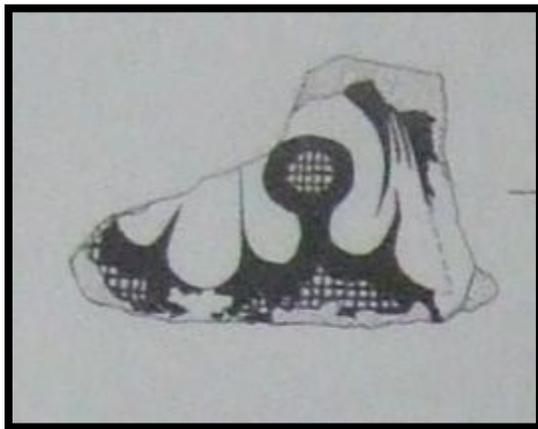
Also the way in which the paint line on the section below curls down on the left hand petal is something that is not seen in the Salisbury glass.



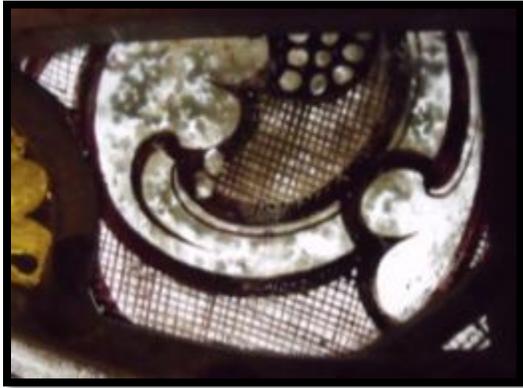
The grisaille glass gives the greatest possibility of comparison with the glass at Salisbury but again there are problems with scale on most sections of glass and we have not been able to match any patterns exactly. Many patterns are similar but this would be the case looking at glass from most English Cathedrals and churches of this period.



Salisbury Cathedral West Elevation South Aisle



Taunton fragments of similar design



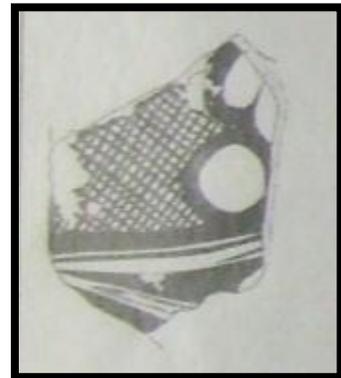
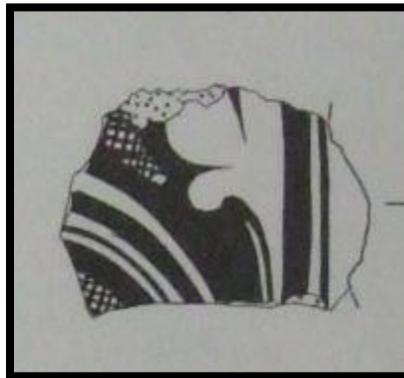
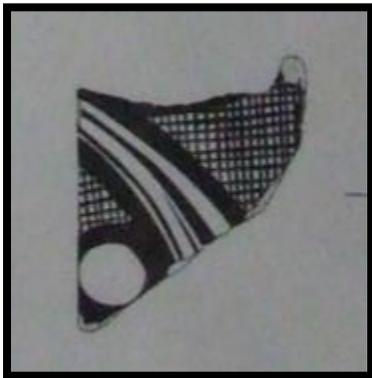
Salisbury glass from: West Elevation



South Transept



South East Transept



Taunton glass for comparison

Conclusion

The Taunton glass is of the same general period and design as much of that found at Salisbury Cathedral but it would seem unlikely that it originated from Salisbury. There are the differences in scale that would suggest that the Taunton glass is from a building where the window sizes would not be on quite such a large scale as that found at Salisbury. There are also the subtle differences in the painted detail and again this might suggest that the windows were designed to be looked at from a closer view point.

It is however possible that the glaziers responsible for the production of the Taunton glass were, familiar with the glass from Salisbury, or may have been involved in some way with the production of glass at Salisbury.

The glass fragments that remain do offer a fascinating, if slightly frustrating look at what the Taunton building may have contained in its windows. The glass is of a good quality with much of the painted detail intact, there is considerable variety of design, enough to be sure that a number of the windows would have been figurative with others containing fine quality grisaille glass.

