Digital heritage and the documentation and publication of medieval buildings

The Guild Chapel
Stratford-upon-Avon
Internet Archaeology 32

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The Guild Buildings of Shakespeare’s Stratford
'And where as of late I have bargayned wth oon Dowland, and diverse other masons for the belynyng and setting up of the Chapell of the holy Trinitie withyn the Towne of Stratford Upon Avon aforesaid And the Towre of a Steple to the same I will that the saide masons sufficiently and ably doo and fynyssh the same with good and true werkmanshipp And they truly to performe the same making the saide werkes aswise of length and brede and hyght such as by the advise of myne executors' (TNÅ, PROB/11/11; SCLA ER 1/121).

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The walls were formerly ornamented with curious paintings, which were discovered during the reparation of the Chapel, in 1804; and upon carefully scraping off the whitewash and paint with which they were covered, many parts were found to be nearly in a perfect state. The most ancient were those in the chancel, which were probably coeval with that part of the Chapel, before conjectured to have been erected by Robert de Stratford, in, or soon after the year 1296: many parts of them, particularly the crosses had been evidently mutilated with some sharp instrument by the ill-directed zeal of our early reformers; the ravages of time had also contributed to injure them so much, that the plaster upon which they were painted, was of necessity taken down before the reparations could be completed; so that those which were in the chancel, with a small exception, are now destroyed; the rest in the nave being painted on stone itself, yet remain, though again coloured over.'

Thomas Fisher (1772-1836) A Series of Antient Allegorical, Historical, and Legendary Paintings Which Were Discovered in the Summer of 1804 on the Walls of the Chapel of the Trinity at Stratford upon Avon in Warwickshire

- Artist and antiquary, ‘Searcher of the Records’, FSA.
- Drawings for Richard Gough’s (1735-1809) second volume of Sepulchral Monuments

Lithography (Polyautography) enables the artist ‘to execute his own ideas, without much loss of time on the one hand; and on the other without the expense [sic] which attends the employment of first-rate engravers, or the hazard of having his work spoiled by novices in the art’

Fisher 1808, 195 and letter to The Gentleman’s Magazine, 1815
Antiquarians at Stratford

Ernest William Tristram (1882-1952)
Professor of Art and Design at the
Royal College of Art

'British Primitives' held at The Royal
Academy in 1923
1927 English Medieval Wall Painting
1929 Stratford restoration

The Director of the V & A on Tristram
‘I do not think any competent judge would deny that Professor
Tristram’s drawings are almost immeasurably superior to any others
which have been or are being made in this particular field’

Tristram on Fisher’s lithographs ‘
some indication of the nature of the subject but [were] inaccurate and
almost valueless as illustrations of the quality of the workmanship’
Wilfrid Puddephat

‘Around the nave of this chapel there was carefully painted the Dance of Death, popularly known as the Dance of Pauls, because there was a similar painting at St Pauls around the cloisters on its north west side, which were destroyed by the Duke of Somerset during Edward VI’s reign’. John Stow, 1576 in his edition of Leland’s *Itinerary*

‘dormant curiousity about the fragmentary mural decorations along its north and south walls was awakened by the realization that they would soon be permanently concealed’

‘the frustration of knowing so little about the remains of this mural eventually drove me up the wall…with a tape measure in my hand’

The restoration of the Guild chapel, 1955, and Puddephat recording the Dance of Death
Puddephat's photographs of the north wall of the nave (SBTR 8/15/3-41) (A) and adjusted version with fragmentary evidence of compartments and detail overlaid (B).
Antiquaries and recording

‘The pencil is as essential as the pen to illustrate antiquities”
Richard Gough (1735-1809)

‘William the Conqueror at Hastings’, 1816-19
Engraved by James Basire (1769-1822), after Charles Alfred Stothard; hand-painted by Charles Alfred Stothard (1786-1821)
Coloured engraving © Society of Antiquaries of London
Visualising the Guild chapel

www.thearnott.com
www.heritagetechnology.co.uk

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http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue32/giles_index.html
The problem of ‘digital realism’

- Embracing of VR models within heritage environments – the potential to take reconstruction drawings ‘one stage further’?
- Photorealistic qualities of VR technologies - engagement, patina, tangibility
- ‘Getting it right’: texture, lighting, feel – a desire for ‘accuracy’ and ‘truth’?
- Removing the imaginative process and ‘work’ of the student?
- Dangers of photorealism – the idea of ‘truth’, removal of interrogation of the model by the viewer. How do we re-introduce this?

Miller P and Richards J 1995
Commercialisation of cultural heritage ...‘data-naïve public’..consuming images and realities ‘divorced from the academic discussion..associated with their development’

ViA project at University of Southampton
The London Charter and the need for paradata?

The need for paradata
Gillings (1999) there is a need for visualisation to be ‘driven by a problem’
Out of visualisation a dialogue emerges - new questions and models, multiple interpretative possibilities (Forte 2000)

How do we address the ‘gap’ between knowledge and image (intellectual content of the translation process, from raw data to VR); and the quality of this fit? As practitioners or ‘user developers’?

Paradata debate and The London Charter – need to address opacity of VR
• The creativity of the process of attempting ‘to think/visualise from things to images’
• Paradata – information which records the transformative/creative process
• Transparency documentation – reflective, methodical and complete

Visualising the Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon: digital models as research tools in buildings archaeology

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Summary

This article disseminates the results of a programme of detailed archaeological survey and archive research on one of Europe's most important surviving late-medieval Guild Chapels — the Holy Cross Guild, Stratford-upon-Avon (Warwickshire). Today the building is part of Stratford-upon-Avon's tourist trail, located directly opposite William Shakespeare's home, 'New Place', and visited by thousands of tourists every year. However, its architectural and historical significance has been overshadowed by the extensive restoration of the building in the 19th and 20th centuries. This destroyed evidence for an internationally significant scheme of wall paintings within the Chapel, paid for by the London Mayor and Stratford-upon-Avon merchant, Hugh Clapton, an important member of the Holy Cross Guild and the original builder of 'New Place'. The paintings also have an important connection with Stratford-upon-Avon's most famous son, William Shakespeare, whose father may have been involved in their destruction and removal during the 16th century.

Research by a team of historical archaeologists and digital heritage specialists at the Department of Archaeology, University of York, has revealed the significance of the Guild Chapel through the creation of a digital model and temporal periods, which form the focus of this article.

The project is groundbreaking in that it moves beyond the traditional use of digital models as virtual reconstructions of past buildings to view the model itself as a research tool through which the user can explore and validate the evidence for the scheme directly. This is achieved through the creation of two datasets of antiquarian drawings of the paintings, made as they were revealed during restoration works in the 19th and 20th centuries, and set within their 3-dimensional architectural context.

The model allows the user to compare and contrast differences in the recording methods, iconographies and interpretations of the scheme. It is supported by the ‘paradigm’ that forms the core of the article text, which provides an innovative model for the analysis of the antiquarian records of the scheme, and their contextual meaning. The project reveals the Guild Chapel at Stratford-upon-Avon to be one of the finest examples of mercantile and guild patronage of the period, shedding important light on the patronage of ecclesiastical art in the wake of the Reformation, and revealing important connections between provincial guilds and the rise of the Renaissance and the development of the 'strange place'.

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Dedication
3.3 The Guild Chapel digital model and its significance

The digital model that forms the focus of this article is innovative in the way in which it seeks to apply the principles of transparency and paradata discussed above within the field of historical archaeology (Bentkowski-Kafel and Denard 2012). Rather than reconstructing the appearance of the Guild Chapel in the 16th century as a source of illustration for a textual narrative, it develops the model explicitly to present the paradata of the Guild Chapel paintings (Figure 16). It achieves this within the model by layering the antiquarian drawings of the paintings made by Thomas Fisher in 1604, E.W. Tristram in 1898-9 and Wilfrid Puddifoot in the 1950s over each other, so that their similarities and differences can be compared directly by the user. The new digital model allows the user to choose their own, non-linear, path through the model and its accompanying paradata, harnessing the unique qualities of the structure of the Internet Archaeology journal format to do so. For example, it is possible to stand in the nave and view the paintings on an antiquarian-by-antiquarian basis, making comparisons based on subject matter, but also by spatial location. The user is free to investigate the antiquarian records in any order and from either the nave or the chancel, moving between the spaces, making their own comparisons, building up their own understandings and meanings within the framework of the article. What is important is not that the paintings can be viewed in their spatial contexts, but the way in which users are allowed to view and experience those paintings and their accompanying paradata for themselves.

Figure 16: The digital model of the Guild Chapel by Anthony Masinton, based on the original model created by Geoff Arnott. Select the thumbnail to launch the model. The Unity web player plugin is required for your browser.

This creates the kind of research tool which Barceló (2001) has described as a 'functional model', and Forte (2000) a 'cognitive model'. The text of the article is also used innovatively to communicate the 'paradata' behind the model itself. Section 4 provides the user with a detailed, critical comparison of the antiquarians' drawings and textual descriptions of the paintings, with the aim of informing and enhancing the user's assessment of the validity and reliability of the different drawings included within the model. Section 5 discusses the biography and historical context of the antiquarians responsible for the drawings, in chronological order. Once again, this allows the viewer to make a critical assessment of the motivations, methods and interpretations of the different drawings (after de Rijke and Beauleieu 2007). Here, the model reminds the user of the 'gaps' between the reality of the past and the interpretative processes of recording and representation (Batemans 2006). It also provides a powerful illustration of the origins and development of recording within the antiquarian tradition (Pearce 2007).

The technology used to develop the interactive digital model as a research tool is a computer-game engine, Unity, in this instance. Computer games excel at presenting a richly visualised and immersive environment which possesses an inherent narrative, whether overt or implicit. The user does not read this narrative so much as they experience it — a form of communication that preserves the (virtual) material over the textual and is therefore especially suited to an archaeological and art-historical subject. This is achieved through balancing the narrative imposed by the game's creators and the free will of the user. The narrative is delivered as a collaboration between creators and user, with the aim of producing new narratives based on what the creators present, how they make it available to the user, and the user's own construction of meaning based on their experience of the game. While the present visualisation does not claim to provide such a subtle experience or way of delivering its narrative, it has borrowed these concepts and incorporated them in an innovative way, into its design.

The visualisations of the Guild Chapel paintings presented in the model and analysed in the text reveal its international significance as one of the finest examples of mercantile and guild artistic patronage in late medieval Northern Europe. However, it is the decision to place transparency and paradata at the heart of the model and its accompanying article that makes this a groundbreaking model, of relevance not only to the digital heritage field but also the wider archaeological community. We hope that the
4.5 The Chancel Arch: the Doom

Context

Images of death and judgement were universal in the late medieval church but by the 14th century the most popular representation of this subject was 'The Doom', or 'Last Judgement' (Rosewell 2008, 72-74), based on the Gospel of St Matthew and other apocryphal sources such as the 14th-century poem The Pevicle of Conscience (Davidson 2000). Waters (1992) and Sawales Wadie, a West Midlands alliterative poem based on chapters 13-15 of Book Four of Hugh of St Victor's De Anima (Davidson 1999, Morris 1860). The Doom also drew on contemporary sermon traditions, such as Myn's Festa, although the long-established visual tradition of Last Judgement imagery is also of considerable significance (Gill 2002). The Doom usually depicted Christ in Judgement, flanked by intercessory saints, over the souls of the dead, rising from their graves. It is usually accompanied by depictions of Hell (to Christ's left) and Heaven (to Christ's right). Over two-thirds of Doom panels were located on the east wall of the nave, above the chancel arch where it was often the largest painted subject within the church (Ashby 1980, 106), although the image could also spread across onto the south and north walls of the nave. Well-preserved examples include the recently restored Doom at Holm Trinity, Coventry (Gill 2008). Gill (2011, 211-12) has argued persuasively that this Doom is of a slightly earlier date, c. 1430-1440, based on the style of the paintings, which are characterised by substantial figures, large and prominent handling of features and illusoryistic architecture, in a manner that parallels the style of contemporary glaziers such as Coventry's John Thornton, and on the details of head-dresses and armours (Park 2003a). It is likely that this nearby Doom influenced that at Stratford, but the style of the Guild Chapel paintings is very different (Gill 1998, 32). Closer in date and style to Stratford is the late 15th-century Last Judgement at St Thomas' church, Salisbury, and those at Holm Trinity, Pers (Bucks) c. 1500 and Wenhamston, (Suffolk) c. 1490, which are painted on panel.

The model and the paintings

The Stratford-upon-Avon Doom depicts the Last Judgement as described in Matthew, Chapter 25 (Davidson and Alexander 1999, 69-70) (see model). Christ sits on a rainbow with his right hand raised in blessing and with his left pointing downwards. The world is depicted as a globe, beneath his feet. To his right kneels the Blessed Virgin Mary, shown with nimbus, wearing a blue, ermine-lined mantle with a griddle at her waist. Her hands are raised, with her palm. Christ's left is St John the Baptist, shown in his brown, camel robe, also with a nimbus but with his hands in prayer. St John the Baptist was the standard intercessor in English and European Doom iconography, a French tradition, where St John the Divine appears. However, his inclusion at Stratford further reflects the Holy Cross cult. However, Stratford lacks the images of the Apostles, which are present in Holm Trinity. The Stratford Doom was designed to incorporate a three-dimensional Road: a cloud flanked by images of Evangelists, the shadow of which is still visible against the painting today (Figure 2). and which appear from the chapel only in 1564-5, under the auspices of the chamberlain, John Shakespere. Far from being the Stratford Doom (Mooney 1996, 194). However, this was also a common feature of many contemporary chancel paintings (Rosewell 2008, 74-77).

At Stratford, as elsewhere, Christ visibly displays his wounds. At Holm Trinity, Coventry, paint analysts has used of varnish, red lead and red lake to differentiate these as 'fresh blood' in order to emphasize the 'spiritual' quality of the painting (Duffy 1999, 244-45, Gill 2011, 215). At Stratford, it is interesting that Stratford's inscriptions and the depiction of 'fresh blood' in a very dialectic way. Sehnsuchts-bearing the instruments of his Passion; a detail of the Holy Trinity image which has only recently been conserved but which is known from other contemporary sites such as Pers (Bucks) (Gill 2011, 215). Images would also have related thematically to the depiction of the Five Wounds on the south wall of the...
5.2 Thomas Fisher

Thomas Fisher (1772-1836) was an artist and antiquary. At the age of fourteen he was employed by the East India Company, East India House, London (Secretary of the East India Company). By 1816 he was known to have written several books on the history of Indian art and architecture, particularly in his native Kent. He produced drawings for Richard Gough's (1735-1800) second volume of Topographical Monuments and exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1804-1808. He was elected to the Society of Antiquaries in May 1836, shortly before his death.

Fisher was adept at brass rubbing and the creation of scale drawings. However, he was also extremely interested in the use of lithography, or polygraphy, as a means of reproducing his drawings; a technique that was fairly new in the early 19th century (Tremewan 1920). In a letter to The Gentleman's Magazine published in 1808, Fisher noted that the use of lithography enabled the artist to execute his own ideas, without much loss of detail on the one hand, and on the other without the expense (i.e. which attends the employment of expert engravers, or the hazard of having his work spoiled by amateurs in the act) (Fisher 1808, 195 and see also a letter to The Gentleman's Magazine, dated 1813).

In an article written in 1919, O'Meara (1920, 241-84) suggested that Fisher's 'workmen at his inception brought to light frescoes buried under plaster'. However, O'Meara's local account of their discovery seems more likely to have been true. Surviving letters indicate that it was the antiquarian Richard Gough (1735-1809) who encouraged Fisher to record the Stratford-upon-Avon wall paintings (O'Meara 1896, 325-326; we are extremely grateful to Dr Bernard O'Meara for drawing our attention to these sources). Fisher's correspondence with Gough suggests that he drew on his patron's assistance with the interpretation of the subject matter and his proposals for publication.

Between 29 April 1807 and 1 January 1808, Fisher prepared his lithographs for publication under the proposed title 'A Series of Ancient Architectural, Historical, and Legendary Paintings Which Were Discovered in the Summer of 1804 on the Walls of the Chapel of St John the Baptist in Stratford-upon-Avon'. Although the first lithographic plates were printed in 1808 and published in 1809, Fisher also intended to augment the publication with further research on the archives of the guild, including 'various historical evidence in facsimile', engraved on copper plates, and letter-press text on which he was still working two years before his death in 1814 (O'Meara 1834, 126).

However, throughout this period Fisher was wrangling with contemporary copyright legislation. This required authors wishing to register their works under the terms of the act to provide eleven copies for deposition with local deposit libraries. Judging that the Stratford volume would have only a limited circulation 'chiefly amongst students in antiquity', and convinced 'there was no improbility of any profitable price', Fisher decided against registering his volume under the Act (Fisher 1811, 409). Unfortunately, further discussions about the nature of the Act in the Court of the King's Bench resulted in Fisher's unsuccessful petition to Parliament to be exempted from its terms. Unwilling to break the law or 'submitting to an illegal expense', he requested that he be allowed to print a limited number of copies. Fisher's request was refused, and his petition that he would be forced to abandon his letter-press, to leave both works unfinished, and to desist from attempting to augment the work was rejected. The first four series of lithographic plates were published in 1809 and most of the 120 copies by 1814. Nevertheless, in his letter to The Gentleman's Magazine in 1811 Fisher assured subscribers that he still hoped to furnish them with the outstanding plates and was not yet in despair. But he did entertain the hope of being enabled to complete my original design.

Fisher produced six lithographic plates, which have been studied carefully and published by Davidson (1988, 12). The surviving copy in the British Library (NL 1899.n.11) includes a scale plan of the Chapel printed in 1809, and a list of subscribers. In 1820, Fisher's drawings were recorded by the Board of Audit for the private collection of George B. Dexter of Boston (O'Meara 1834). Fisher's dream of a Stratford publication was never realized. His notes on the guild were only published as a contrast by Gentlemen's Magazine in 1801, a year before his death (Fisher 1830). The 'Series of Ancient Paintings' were finally published in 1834 (O'Meara 1834, 12).

5.3 Twentieth-century antiquarians

5.3.1 E.W. Tristram

Although during the 19th century the Stratford Guild Chapel and its paintings had excited the interest of so many eminent and local antiquaries, the paintings were nevertheless whitewashed over and part of the paintings were lost. By the early 20th century, scholars such as Ernest William Tristram (1882-1952), Professor of Art and Design at the Royal College of Art, were beginning to demonstrate the significance of the English tradition of wall painting in paintings such as that of the British Museum held at The Royal Academy in 1923 (RA 1924) and the works of E.S. Tristram's 1927 Medieval Wall Painting, published jointly with another antiquarian, E.J. Bowles. As more came to light in the early 20th century, E.W. Tristram became the acknowledged expert on the subject and undertook a herculean effort to research and record the paintings by hand, to offer advice on their conservation and restoration.

Tristram's research resulted in the publication of three major volumes of English Medieval Wall Painting, covering the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, published by the Iona Press in 1944, 1950 and posthumously, in 1950. The drawings on which his research was based were gradually acquired by the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1924. In 1924 they were setting aside £50 per annum for this purpose (V&A MM 1/17339) and by 1931, this had risen considerably. When questioned by the trustees about this level of expenditure, the Director responded swiftly that, 'The formation of some such collection of copies of English wall paintings seems to me to be essentially part of our function here and it is not being done elsewhere, adding that I do not think any competent judge would deny that Professor Tristram's drawings are almost immeasurably superior to anything which has been or can be made in this particular field.' However, Tristram's conservative efforts were less successful. His use of wax dissolved in turpentine as a fixative created an impervious surface which prevented damage from escaping through the lime-plaster surfaces and ultimately resulted in damage to the paintings he sought to preserve (Figure 2).

Tristram's notebooks, compiled with his colleague Horace Handlow, were also deposited at the Victoria & Albert Museum, in the National Art Library. They demonstrate that Tristram was familiar with the history and recording of the paintings of Thomas Falasie in 1804 and with the fact that they were 'nearly entirely destroyed with the exception of some white traces on the wall' (Tristram 1927). The remains of the paintings were recorded by E. W. Tristram, who became the acknowledged expert on the subject. Tristram's work was published in three volumes, covering the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in 1924, 1931 and 1938.

Although Tristram and Long acknowledged the importance of Falasie's initial record of the paintings, both were somewhat skeptical about the quality of his drawings. Long described them as 'indifferent' and Tristram suggested that while they gave 'some indication of the nature of the subject but [were] inaccurate and almost valueless as illustrating the quality of the workmanship'. He was dissatisfied with some images said to have been executed by Thomas Falasie, and the failure of the projected exhibition of the sixteenth century at the Guildhall, the project was abandoned and the exhibition was never held.
6. Conclusion

This article has sought to demonstrate the potential of heritage technologies, particularly virtual models, as research tools within historical archaeology. It has shown how digital models can be developed that move beyond the aesthetically-pleasing, but intellectually restrictive, photorealistic reconstructions that have tended to dominate the field in recent years. By engaging critically with contemporary debates in heritage technology, particularly issues of transparency, a digital model of the Stratford-upon-Avon Guild Chapel has been created which functions as a research tool, through which the user can explore and assess the validity of the analysis and interpretations presented within the article text. Moreover, the format of this article also provides an innovative example of how paradata can be placed at the core of scholarly debate, rather than being relegated to a series of technical appendices within the model. In this way, the publication provides an important model for the use of virtual models within the discipline of archaeology more widely.

The visualisation of the Stratford-upon-Avon Guild Chapel has allowed the international significance of this building to be revealed in two important ways. First, the detailed analysis of its late 15th-century scheme of wall paintings has revealed it to be one of the most coherent and important examples of late medieval mercantile and guild patronage of its day. The scheme was used to make a powerful statement about the status and identity of its patron, Hugh Clopton, and his affiliation to the Guild of the Holy Cross. The Stratford scheme is one of the finest reflections of late medieval preoccupations with the ‘ars moriendi’, created on the eve of the Reformation. It also reveals how apparently ‘provincial’ sites such as Stratford-upon-Avon were connected to a European tradition of Gothic art, via the dissemination of iconographies such as the ‘Dance of Death’ from its original context in the Cemetery of the Innocents, Paris, via St Paul’s cloister in London, by the patronage of men such as Hugh Clopton. The analysis of the scheme sheds important light on the link between late medieval wall paintings and devotional manuscripts and printed sources, such as The Golden Legend. But close analysis of the images also reveals the interpretative and creative process behind the creation of such painted schemes, suggesting the existence of more ephemeral textual and graphic sources and oral traditions, through which such sources were translated into artistic form.

Second, the digital model has emphasised the significance and potential of the close, critical analysis of antiquarians and their drawings in understanding the changing and multiple interpretations of buildings and decorative schemes within historical archaeology. The biographical analysis of the Stratford antiquarians has revealed the important networks of patronage and intellectual exchange which informed this tradition from the 16th to the 20th centuries. The model shows how different antiquarians drew upon, or reacted against, the work of their predecessors, opening up multiple and alternative interpretations of the scheme that reflected contemporary intellectual traditions. Stratford-upon-Avon also provides a microcosm of the development of building recording within the discipline, from John Leland’s textual descriptions of the 16th century, to the pioneering use of scaled drawings and photography in the 19th and 20th century work of Thomas Fisher and Wilfrid Puddephat. Although the Guild Chapel is therefore of significance because of its links to some of the most important antiquarians of the day, such as John Stow, J.G. Nichols or E.W. Tristram, it also reveals the important role of ‘amateur’ scholars, such as Robert Wheeler, or Wilfrid Puddephat, within the antiquarian tradition.

Throughout, the aim of this article has been to present the archaeological and historical data transparently, to guide the user through the evidence in the digital model, and through the critical interdisciplinary analysis of architectural fabric, decorative schemes, archival records and drawings. In this way, the article and model also seek to provide a ground-breaking example of the way in which digital technologies can be harnessed within the arts and humanities more widely.