Some churches of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in southern Germany: a review of the evidence

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An historical introduction outlines the main events in the lives of the principal missionaries – Willibald, Wynnebald, Waldburga, Sola – during the central years of the eighth century, and argues that Willibald was consecrated bishop of Erfurt. A review of the topographical and archaeological evidence concentrates on Eichstätt, whose street pattern reveals the layout of the early town and monastery; new interpretations are suggested for unusual features uncovered by excavation at the cathedral/monastery site. The excavations at Solnhofen are similarly re-examined. Overall, no substantial evidence is found for Anglo-Saxon influence on the church archaeology of the area.

Introduction

The activities of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in eighth-century Germany have been discussed in print on numerous occasions, notably by Levison and by Schieffer. More recently an attempt has been made to investigate the material remains of the mission at sites which lie mainly in the Federal German Land of Hessen, but with outliers at Mainz, Würzburg and Erfurt. It was found that in this and other areas of English and Irish activity there was a tendency to choose as ecclesiastical centres hilltop sites in strategic positions, frequently at river crossings. The sites were often already enclosed, and some of them were fortified in the Merovingian or earlier periods. It was noted that these characteristics were paralleled in the British Isles, where there

was a similar tendency to reuse Roman enclosures and fortifications of both Roman and prehistoric date, though it was not clear whether the relationship was a causal one. In addition, many of the sites in the various mission areas were given to the church by the Frankish rulers, either royal or common.

On the architectural side, the evidence was very much more limited. There are no standing buildings of mid-eighth-century date or earlier that could be associated with the activities of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries. The key monastic site at Fulda was the subject of an extensive building programme under an energetic abbot in the late eighth to early ninth century and a church of monumental proportions was dedicated in 819, only to be swept away in a Baroque reconstruction in the early eighteenth century. This church, and its accompanying monastic layout, was heavily influenced by Old St Peter’s in Rome, and there is nothing in the results of the archaeological excavations to suggest any residual effects of the site’s Anglo-Saxon connections. Too little is known about its possible eighth-century predecessor for any conclusion to be drawn. In ‘Sites and monuments’ I argued that the Fulda church dedicated in 819 set a trend in the area of Bonifacian influence: the cathedral church at Mainz begun c. 975 similarly had its high altar and main choir at the west end of the building, and its probable predecessor, St John’s, is also likely to have been inversely oriented; remains of unknown date excavated at Fritzlar, another site associated with St Boniface, seemed to indicate another church with a western apse. Since all of these examples occur at sites with Bonifacian associations, it was argued that there may have been some latent influence surviving from the primary mission period, notwithstanding Boniface’s death half a century before the extension of the Fulda basilica. Perhaps this was no more than an exaggerated loyalty to the Holy See which continued to pervade the archdiocese of Mainz after the death of the saint. It may be noted that a new discussion of the Fritzlar discoveries has cast doubt on the west transept interpretation, though the western apse is still relevant in the Fulda/Mainz context, and the late-eighth century date proposed strengthens the case for possible Bonifacian influence.

Although the archdiocese of Mainz was the principal area of

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missionary activity, Boniface also had dealings with the established but under-organized church in Bavaria, making appointments to the sees of Salzburg, Passau, Regensburg and Freising in 739. The area of potential Anglo-Saxon influence therefore stretched from the Bavarian Alps in the south to Bad Hersfeld in Hessen and Erfurt in Thuringia in the north (Fig. 1). The ecclesiastical settlement of the more southerly areas was less intense than that in Hessen, however. In the neighbourhood of Würzburg, on the borders of Hessen and Franconia, there was a pocket

Fig. 1 Anglo-Saxon missionary sites in central and southern Germany (open circle sites for location only). The frame indicates the area of Fig. 2.
of activity, with monastic houses at Kitzingen and Ochsenfurt and the more famous Tauberbischofsheim a little further to the south-west. Nearer to the heartland of Bavaria, another area of Anglo-Saxon settlement can be identified in the valley of the Altmühl, which joins the Danube south-west of Regensburg (Fig. 2). The key sites here are Eichstätt, where Willibald, possibly a kinsman of Boniface, was bishop from 742 to 787, Heidenheim, where Willibald’s brother and sister were successively head of the apparently double monastery, and Solnhofen, where a monastery was established by the eponymous Sola, another pupil of Boniface. These sites do not share the topographical characteristics of the monasteries farther north, though one could argue for the early occupation of a defensible promontory site at Eichstätt. Eichstätt and Solnhofen were aristocratic and royal grants respectively; according to the *Life of St Wynnebald*, the site for the monastery at Heidenheim was initially acquired by purchase and later augmented by gifts from local landowners.8

This article reviews the evidence – archaeological, architectural and historical – for these sites and events in an attempt to establish the characteristics of the buildings of the missionary phase, either directly or by extrapolation from later information. It examines what, if anything, the missionary sites and their buildings had in common, and how far that may be attributed to their shared Anglo-Saxon background. In particular, a new interpretation of the enigmatic circular building at Eichstätt is proposed, and a context for it in the preoccupations of the English missionaries is suggested.9

### Historical summary

Chronologically, the foundation of Eichstätt comes first. Willibald, the founder, was a West Saxon, who left England two years after Boniface in 720. With his brother, Wynnebald, and their father he set off not on a missionary enterprise but on a pilgrimage to Rome. While Wynnebald remained in Rome, Willibald continued in 723 via Sicily and Asia Minor to the Holy Land, where his experiences in Jerusalem and the other Holy Places in 724–6 formed the basis for the later ‘Hodoeporicon’ or *Life of St Willibald*.10 He then spent two years in Constanti-

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9 This paper is an enlarged and extensively revised version of the one read to the 47th annual meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians in Philadelphia, PA, on 30 April 1994.

noble returning to Italy in 729, where he entered the monastery of Monte Cassino. In 739, having accompanied a Spanish priest to Rome, he was commissioned by Pope Gregory III to join Boniface in Germany. He travelled to Bavaria, where he met Duke Odilo and Suidger, count of Sualafeld and Nordgau. Willibald and Suidger then met Boniface, who sent them to Eichštät, where the count, doubtless with his overlord's agreement, made over the territory to Boniface. Willibald was ordained priest by Boniface in 740. The following year he was summoned to Thuringia, where he again met his brother after a long separation, and lived in his house. Boniface consecrated him bishop at Sulzenbrücken, near Erfurt. 11 He then returned to Eichštät, where he founded a monastery in a deserted place, where however a church dedicated to St Mary survived. He remained 'bishop of the monastery of Eichštät' until his death in 787. 12 Given the place of his consecration, it is likely that Erfurt was intended to be his diocesan centre, as I argue below.

Meanwhile, the bishop's brother, Wynnebald, had remained in Rome until 727, returned to England and then visited Rome again from c. 730 to c. 739. He then joined Boniface in Germany, was ordained priest and was entrusted with seven churches in Thuringia, where he remained for about five years, during which time Willibald visited him and was consecrated bishop. In about 752, following further activity in

11 Vita Willibaldi, §5: Bauch, Quellen, pp. 81 and 122, n. 263; not Salzburg, pace Talbot, Anglo-Saxon Missionaries, p. 175.
Bavaria and in Mainz, Wynnebald, with the support of his brother, now firmly established in Eichstätt, founded the monastery of Heidenheim (just south of the watershed between the Altmühl and Rohrach valleys) and remained its head until his death in 761. The community then continued under their sister Walburga, who recruited nuns and thus converted Heidenheim into a double monastery. In 776 the relics of Wynnebald were translated to Eichstätt; Walburga died in 779, and in the 870s her relics were moved to Eichstätt to join those of her brothers; in 893 her relics began to be distributed over a wide area in Europe.

Few details are known of the life of Sola, the last member of the group of Anglo-Saxon religious who were active in the area of the Altmühl valley in the eighth century. He seems to have been trained in the monastery at Fulda, and was ordained by Boniface himself. Around 750 he took over a site at a place, later called Solnhofen after him, as a hermitage, and in 793 received it as a gift from the future emperor Charlemagne. The following year Sola died, leaving his property to the Fulda monastery, and was buried, apparently on the north side of his church. His remains were exhumed in 838/9 and placed in a new tomb very close to his original burial place, but at a higher level.

The location of Willibald’s episcopal see

The identification of Willibald’s diocesan centre has given rise to much controversy in the secondary literature. Shortly after his consecration he withdrew to Eichstätt, where his monastery became the base for his future activities and, judging by the monastic foundations which followed, the centre of his sphere of influence. Nevertheless, there is considerable doubt about the missionaries’ intention formally to establish a see based on Eichstätt. There is no suggestion in Boniface’s letter to Pope Zacharias in 742 of a fourth see in central Germany, and Eichstätt had not been among the Bavarian sees confirmed by Gregory III three years earlier. In the Life of Boniface by Willibald the priest, however, there is mention of a diocese of Eichstätt, which the author says Boniface ‘entrusted’ to Bishop Willibald. Since this Life could have been written as late as 768, it does not necessarily represent the

14 Miracula Walburgis; excerpted in Bauch, Quellen, pp. 255–69.
15 His name is given in the (Latin) documents as Solus; his Old English name is not recorded, and the form Sola is a reconstruction.
16 Vita Sualonis: Bauch, Quellen, pp. 196–239.
17 Talbot, Anglo-Saxon Missionaries, nos. 27, pp. 98–9, and 24, p. 94.
18 Talbot, Anglo-Saxon Missionaries, p. 53.
situation at the time of Willibald’s consecration in the early 740s, though the *Annals of Fulda* have a similar reference under the year 746. There is no other contemporary reference to Willibald as bishop ‘of Eichstädt’. At the Council of Attigny in 762 he was one of five bishops described as being based on monasteries (*episcopus de monasterio Achistaedi*) rather than proper urban centres or *civitates*. As late as 918 Bishop Odalfried was described in a royal charter confirming the establishment of the mint and market at Eichstädt as *Eihstetensis cenobii episcopus*.20

If Willibald was a bishop without a territorial see, Erfurt, the third of the sites Boniface reported to the pope in 742, was a see without a bishop. The older literature suggested Æthelhere (Adelar), one of the martyr companions of Boniface, as the first bishop of Erfurt, on the grounds that his relics were later enshrined there in the collegiate church of St Mary. However, he is described in the texts only as *sacerdos*. Dadanus, attested as bishop at the Concilium Germanicum, was the candidate favoured by Schieffer and his mentor Levison, who explicitly rejected Willibald as a possible candidate.22 Nevertheless, many historians find good reasons to suggest that Willibald was in fact consecrated for Erfurt, despite his almost immediate withdrawal to Eichstädt. An oft-cited reason is the proximity of Süllzenbrücken, the place of Willibald’s consecration, to Erfurt, named by Boniface as an episcopal centre. Süllzenbrücken is near Ichtershausen, some twelve kilometres from the centre of Erfurt. Apart from Wynnebald’s base being there, there seems little reason for choosing Süllzenbrücken rather than Eichstädt itself or Würzburg, the nearer of the sees of the two consecrating bishops, unless Willibald were being made bishop of the

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Thuringian diocese. There was a serious Anglo-Saxon commitment to this area as a missionary territory. In addition to nominating Erfurt as a diocesan centre Boniface had founded a monastery at Ohrdruf, twenty-five kilometres to the south-west. Having ordained Wynnebald priest, he put him in charge of seven churches, which sounds very like an Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical *territorium* with Sülzenbrücken as its minster. English interest in the area went back to the days of Willibrord, however, who in 704 obtained a grant from the local duke, Hедeno, of estates at Arnstadt, Mühlberg and ‘Monra’. The first two of these sites lie between Ohrdruf and Erfurt. The third was identified by Pertz in his edition of the charter as ‘Мünchen between Erfurt and Weimar’. This presumably is München-Holzhausen, close to Nonra, which is what Wiemann probably intended; it lies about ten kilometres east of Erfurt. The territory thus defined extended no more than thirty-five kilometres north-east from Ohrdruf, and appears to have been a very compact area of Anglo-Saxon influence. The selection of Erfurt, rather than Ohrdruf itself or Sülzenbrücken, as the centre of a proposed diocese was no doubt determined by its tenuous quasi-urban status, as I have discussed elsewhere, and its royal rank, first attested a century later.

If Willibald was consecrated for Erfurt, his almost immediate withdrawal to Eichstätt requires explanation, though there is a strong parallel here with Willibrord, who had been allocated Utrecht as his episcopal see, but spent much of his time and devoted much of his energy and patronage to his ‘home’ monastery at Echternach. Willibrord’s designation as *episcopus de monasterio Epternaco* is closely similar to Willibald’s at the Attigny council. Willibald’s move to Eichstätt and Wynnebald’s subsequent withdrawal from Sülzenbrücken to Heidenheim are frequently interpreted in the light of the political and military situation, specifically Carloman’s campaign against the Old Saxons in north-east Thuringia in 745, one of the traditional

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dates for the foundation of the diocese of Eichstätt. The effect of military affairs in Frisia on the location and activities of Willibrord again provides a close parallel.

Other reasons why Erfurt may not have been tenable as an episcopal centre are explored by Werner, who discusses the tradition, first attested in the twelfth century, that the monastery of St Peter on the hill occupied by the royal palace was founded in 706 by King Dagobert through the Alsatian monastery of Wissembourg (also dedicated to St Peter). He suggests that established Frankish activity in the area may have been the reason for Boniface’s monastic foundation at Ohrdruf rather than at Erfurt itself. Such rivalry, could it be substantiated, might equally account for his inability to realize his plans for Erfurt as an episcopal see, though Pope Zacharias’s reply to his 742 letter and the lack of a confirmatory charter for Erfurt might suggest that Boniface had second thoughts in view of the pope’s misgivings about Erfurt’s suitability. Against this, it must be admitted that Eichstätt was no more suitable, from the traditional Roman point of view, as a diocesan centre.

The chronology of events in the early 740s has also given rise to much debate. Boniface’s letter to the pope announcing the proposed new sees in central Germany is variously date to 741 or 742. Since Boniface congratulates Zacharias on his election and consecration (3/10 December 741), knowledge of which will have taken some time to reach Germany in midwinter, his letter can hardly have been written until early or mid-742. While the bishoprics are named, the proposed occupants of the sees are not, so their consecration is not yet likely to have taken place. The date of Willibald’s consecration at the hands of Witta and Burchard must have been 21 October 742. 21 October must be correct, since his Life is quite specific that it occurred exactly three weeks before the feast of St Martin (11 November) ‘almost to the hour’. Bauch amends the date to 22 October on the grounds that 21 October 741 was a Saturday and that the Sunday would be a more likely day for the ceremony, rather than accepting that the event took place one year later, when 21 October was a Sunday. This is not too late a date for Willibald’s name to appear on the list of bishops attending the Concilium Germanicum, provided one accepts the

33 Pfeiffer, ‘Erfurt oder Eichstätt?’, p. 149.
34 M. Werner, Die Gründungstradition des Erfurter Petersklosters (Sigmaringen, 1973), pp. 7–12.
35 §5, Bauch, Quellen, p. 83.
36 Bauch, Quellen, p. 122, n. 261.
argument of Dierkens, following Schieffer's detailed excursus, in favour of 21 April 743 as the date of the council. Once again, this was a Sunday, indeed the octave of Easter, and a likely day for the holding of a synod. According to this interpretation, the capitulary recording the proceedings, which is apparently securely dated on internal evidence, is simply misdated by one year. On balance, then, it appears that Willibald was consecrated bishop on 21 October 742 and that his episcopal centre was originally intended to be Erfurt. By this time Pope Zacharias's reply to Boniface's letter was no doubt to hand, and its very grudging acceptance of the proposed see may have led to second thoughts on Boniface's part and thus to the almost immediate withdrawal of Willibald to Eichstätt.

Topographical and architectural evidence

[Markt] Heidenheim

Heidenheim is situated on a small stream that flows south to join the Rohrach, but is only four kilometres (two-and-a-half miles) north-west of the source of the Eastern Rohrach, a tributary of the Altmühl. It is possible that a church existed here before Wynnebald's monastic foundation of c. 752, and it may have been on the site of the subsequent monastery church. This has been the parish church since the Reformation, but before 1552 there was a separate parish church some twenty-two metres south-east of the monastery, which may have stood on the site of the putative early church. No tangible evidence has survived of Wynnebald's church, nor of the massive stone structure with a crypt which replaced it in 776. These were swept away in the building of the present church in the twelfth century. The third church of c. 870 is represented by a short stretch of wall observed during restoration work in 1969; this seems to have been the outer south wall of a church which, if symmetrically disposed about the axis of the present building, was some ten metres wide. The surviving

monuments to Saints Wynnebald and Walburga date from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, but the structure of St Walburga's mausoleum may perpetuate her original burial place. It is built through an arch of the north arcade of the present church, and its north side is on the presumed alignment of the north wall of the late-ninth-century church (Fig. 3). This is a comparable position to that of the tomb of Sola in the church at Solnhofen.42

Eichstätt: the monastic precinct (Fig. 4)

In Willibald’s Life the site on which he founded his monastery is described as vastatum. This hagiographical convention should not necessarily be taken seriously. The site of Fulda is similarly described in the Life of Boniface, but archaeological investigation has made it clear that there had been considerable occupation in the area since the Iron Age.43 Nevertheless, at both sites the evidence suggests that there might have been at least a temporary abandonment of the settlement before the arrival of the missionaries. At Eichstätt the destruction of the earlier buildings was far from complete, since a church dedicated to St Mary survived. There must have been human survivors, too, or the dedication of the church would not have been transmitted. There is also a presumption that two farmsteads existed before the arrival of the missionaries. One of these was on the bank of the Altmühl, and the church of St Mary was associated with it. Later, when St Walburga’s remains were translated from Heidenheim between 870 and 879, there was an already existing church of the Holy Cross ready to receive them (Figs. 4 and 5, A). This may have been associated with another riverside estate, and although the church is not likely to predate the Willibald foundation, the estate may have done so. The settlement area of these two farmsteads was included within the medieval town wall.44 The church of St Mary was taken into the circuit of the bishop’s precinct when licence was granted to fortify it in 908. The town, which grew up around this precinct, lies to the north of the river Altmühl (Fig. 4, B). On the opposite side of the river is a prominent ridge of high ground, running from south-east to north-west, around which the river flows in a huge meander immediately upstream of Eichstätt itself (Fig. 4, C). By analogy with Würzburg, this might have been expected

43 Parsons, ‘Sites and Monuments’, p. 290.
44 Spindler, Archäologie und Geschichte, p. 227.
to provide the location for the first ecclesiastical settlement of the missionaries, with a later migration to the valley below. On the tip of the promontory is a massive castle, the Willibaldsburg, built between 1354 and 1367 (Fig. 4, D). This has been identified as the successor of the Altenburg (old or former castle), which some scholars think predates the ‘new’ fortified town of 908; a monastery was founded here in the eleventh century in veteris urbis monte. There is a record of the discovery of a section of earthwork across the neck of the promontory about eighty metres east of the most easterly bastion of the castle. It was seven metres wide and one-and-a-half metres high, and had been disturbed by quarrying at its northern end. There were no finds, and it was regarded as a prehistoric feature. Further along the spur to the south-east, some one-and-a-third kilometres from the Willibaldsburg and south-east of Eichstätt town centre, there is a chapel, the Frauenbergkapelle, close to which lies a small rectangular earthwork, which is somewhat eroded, but still clearly visible (Fig. 4, E). These two sites on the ridge might repay investigation and could have some bearing on the early history of the town and its monastery.

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47 F. Winkelmann, Eichstätt: Sammlung des historischen Vereins]. Katalog west- und süddeutscher Alterthumssammlungen 6 (Frankfurt am Main, 1926), p. 22.
On the present showing, however, St Mary’s church has the best claim to be the senior Christian site of Eichstätt. It has traditionally been identified with the former parish church, which was dedicated to Our Lady (‘Zu Unserer Lieben Frau’). This stood some 200 metres north-west of the cathedral (Fig. 5, B), but was partly destroyed in the early nineteenth century. It was deconsecrated and its parochial duties were transferred to the cathedral in 1808. In 1818 the choir was pulled down and the nave converted into houses. The construction of new bank premises on the site in 1983 and road improvements in the following year allowed extensive excavation to take place. The earliest

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archaeological evidence was a dense occupation layer of sixth- to seventh-century date, above which there was evidence of settlement in the tenth century. An early Romanesque church was constructed on the site, its foundations cutting the tenth-century occupation layer. In the south aisle of this church there was a series of postholes cut into the earlier occupation layer, and dated to the late seventh to early eighth century. These were interpreted as the remains of a timber building and compared with the wooden church of Phase IV at Solnhofen. Since

Rieder, 'Untersuchungen', p. 25.
the latter has been subsequently reinterpreted as the foundation of a timber screen (see below) and since the published plan of the Eichstätt excavations does not make the extent of the posthold ‘structure’ entirely clear, there must be some doubt about this interpretation. The putative wooden church has not been considered in the Munich corpus entry.\footnote{Jacobsen et al., Nachtragsband, pp. 107–8.}

The extent of the monastery founded by St Willibald has been the subject of much debate. Many commentators assume that it was coterminous with the town which was formally granted a charter in 908, allowing the bishop of Eichstätt to hold a market at his monastery and to fortify the town.\footnote{...ad suum coenobium mercatum habere urbemque construere: Heidingsfelder, Regesten, nos. 101 and 113.} The line of the tenth-century town wall has been identified in the street pattern of present-day Eichstätt (Fig. 5). The southern and western sides are represented by Residenzplatz and Pfahlstrasse respectively. On the eastern side of Pfahlstrasse, opposite the Town Hall, is a gap in the building line. Turning through this, the northern boundary of the town runs along the side of buildings in the southern extension of the market place, one of which, the Café im Paradies in 1990 (Marktplatz 9), is built over the tenth-century town ditch, according to an information sheet available to customers. To the south of this, the north-eastern corner of an island block of buildings (Marktplatz 7) is the site of the church of Our Lady (Fig. 5, B), which was within the enclosure of the town. On the eastern side of the market place, modern premises on the south side of Marktgasse have engulfed the line of the town wall, but the shape of the building block suggests its original position and direction. The line then crosses Widmannsgasse and follows Winkelwirtsgasse and Hexengasse to the gable end of the episcopal palace. The street frontage of this palace and the library and administration building of the Catholic university to the south of it complete the circuit. This is essentially the line proposed by several local historians, who have identified it in part using names of streets and alleys that have been changed since, or whose line has been masked by town centre development.\footnote{e.g. Winkelmann, Eichstätt, p. 63; Mader, Stadt Eichstätt, pp. 6–7; E. Herzog, ‘Eichstäts Stadtbaukunst [im Mittelalter]’, Sammelblatt des historischen Vereins Eichstätt 59 (1961–2), pp. 7–43, at p. 18.}

Within this enclosure, however, a smaller trapezoidal area has been identified, which may be that of the earlier monastic precinct. Its eastern side is represented by the west elevations of the episcopal palace and the post office. The north-east corner is at the point where Leuchtenbergstrasse meets Domplatz diagonally; the north-west corner...
is formed by the angle in Gutenberggasse. The western side is a line running from this point to the north-west angle of the cathedral through a building (Domplatz 8) which was formerly the Landvogtei, but which in 1990 accommodated a travel agent and doctors' surgeries. A vaulted passage through this building existed until about 1880 and is recognizable once again in the main entrance to the premises, which faces north on to Gutenberggasse. The line then runs down the eastern side of Pfahlstrasse and turns east along the inner side of the south range of the cathedral cloister and then follows the south façade of the complex of buildings around the cathedral opposite the end of Holbeingasse and forms the south-eastern corner of the trapezium near the diocesan museum. This is essentially the area described by Herzog. It is, of course, intrinsically undatable, and archaeological investigation has failed to confirm its outline below ground.

Eichstätt: the monastery church and cathedral

Excavations took place in the cathedral from 1970 to 1974. The results are well known on account of the promptly published interim reports. The latest pre-monastic levels were found to contain pottery of Burgheim and Donzdorf types and fragments of metalwork similar to those found in the late Reihengräber cemeteries. Above these was a layer of burnt material, which is interpreted as the destruction of the site before the foundation of Willibald’s monastery. The latter is represented by a substantial wall running north–south just to the west of the present north door of the cathedral, thought to be the eastern limit of the monastic enclosure in the mid-eighth century (Fig. 6). Abutting this wall, but to the south of the axis of the present building, was a rectangular structure consisting of three parallel elements running east–west; the central unit was slightly wider than those flanking it, and finished in an apse, whose crown was less than a metre from the supposed precinct wall. From the crown of the apse to the west wall the building was about eleven metres long. This perhaps basilican structure is regarded a the first monastic church.

To the east of this stood an earlier building represented by massive unmortared stone foundations. The remains of burnt timbers in this

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55 Spindler, Denkmäler und Fundstätten, p. 41.
Fig. 6. Excavations in Eichstätt cathedral: the early buildings (after Sage, 'Willibaldsdom'). The eighth-century monastic church with its boundary wall and Willibald's cathedral to the east are shaded; the footings of the pre-cathedral buildings are hatched.
area have suggested the interpretation of a substantial wooden building predating the foundation of the monastery, but perhaps continuing in use after the construction of the latter. It may not have been destroyed until the erection of the first ‘cathedral’. In view of the uncertainties about the site of Willibald’s see, the term ‘cathedral’ should be used with care in the context of the eighth century. It permeates the literature, however, and is used by the excavator to refer to the building under discussion. It is adopted here to avoid confusion and as a convenient shorthand reference, though it should be noted that there is no material evidence for the function of the church thus designated, apart from its location under the later cathedral. Because of their position close to the centre of the later cathedral (though the axis was not exactly the same), the unmortared foundations are regarded as representing an ecclesiastical building, perhaps the church of St Mary said to have been in existence when the monastery as founded (but see the discussion above).57 The full extent of this building was not determined, because part of it was destroyed by the construction of the Romanesque cathedral, but it seems unlikely to have been smaller than the monastic church described above. The author of the Life states categorically, however, that St Mary’s was smaller (minora quam alia aecclesia quam postea Willibaldus ibi construxerat), and it was still standing when she wrote, probably about 780. It was not rebuilt until the time of Bishop Heribert (1022–42), who erected a new church, presumably on the same site.58 The long survival of St Mary’s, which is indicated by the documentary sources, does not tally with the archaeological finding that the timber building was quickly superseded by the church regarded as Willibald’s cathedral. Moreover, the original St Mary’s is traditionally associated with the site of the later collegiate parish church north of the cathedral (the church of Our Lady), as discussed above, despite the lack of hard archaeological evidence.59

The building which replaced it was regarded on stratigraphic grounds to be ‘not much later’ than the early monastic church.60 It appears to have been a large aisleless building, but its full extent was not discovered because of the eleventh-century destruction (Fig. 7). The foundations of the south and west walls and the robber trench of the north wall lay immediately to the west of the present crossing, and the surviving part of the building measured approximately twelve metres both north–south and east–west; the north and south walls

57 Vita Willibaldi, §§; Bauch, Quellen, pp. 80–81.
58 Bauch, Quellen, p. 121, n. 252.
60 Sage, ‘Bamberg und Eichstätt’, p. 211.
Fig. 7 Excavations in Eichstätt cathedral: the later buildings (after Sage, ‘Willibaldsdom’). The circular and semi-elliptical buildings have replaced the earlier monastery, but Willibald’s cathedral remains in use.
followed the same alignment as the present nave arcades. Sage interprets this as Willibald’s cathedral and dates it shortly after his consecration in 741/2. It is conceivable, however, that the real date is somewhat later than this, if the claim that Willibald was consecrated for Erfurt is correct. The building of a cathedral in Eichstätt may have been delayed until it was clear that Erfurt would not survive as an episcopal centre.

The next major structure on the site is perhaps the most intriguing. After a major fire and the construction of a temporary building which partly overlay the early monastic complex, the whole of the western area of the site was levelled and covered with a layer of clay. Immediately to the west of the monastic boundary wall, but on the axis of the cathedral, a substantial circular building with flanking stair turrets and a western porch was constructed. The interior ground-floor chamber, whose floor was about a metre below the ground level outside, had four shallow wall niches. Upper storeys are implied by the staircase towers. The purpose of the building is not clear. Sage has argued for a baptistery on the grounds of its circular form, referring to the churches of St Mary in the Citadel, Würzburg, and the so-called Gnadenkapelle in Altötting. The plan of these buildings makes them suitable for this function, though there is no proof that either was a baptistery. The Würzburg chapel is suggestively located within the castellum, the site of the primitive cathedral, and has substantial recesses around the central area, which parallels early baptistery plans; its dedication to St Mary is less convincing, however. The Altötting chapel has a similar plan and the same dedication; it has recently been redated ‘hardly before 1000’. The form of the building excavated at Eichstätt is scarcely comparable with these. Its shallow niches are merely decorative wall articulation, unlike the functional recesses at Würzburg and Altötting. Its height, its stair turrets and the foundations flanking the entrance, which imply a huge blind arch on the west elevation, have more in common with the westwork of the Palatine chapel in Aachen, as Sage himself pointed out.

The main problem with the baptistery interpretation, however, is the fact that the slightly sunken lowest stage of the circular building was not originally connected to the church to its east; the doorway at this level was broken through at a later date. Since the rite of baptism

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implies a symbolic progression through the font into the main body of the church, direct physical access to the nave is essential. However, the upper part of the circular building might have opened on to the interior of a putative church whose west wall is represented by the short stretch of masonry running south from the eastern face of the southern stair turret (see below, p. 57). Jacobsen considers that the upper level of the ‘tower’ may have been the apse of such a church, but rejects any interpretation of this stage as a baptistery, on the grounds that baptisteries are not normally raised above another chamber. 65 Whatever the liturgical purpose of the possible western apse, the sunken chamber beneath it remains unexplained.

An alternative hypothesis

Another, equally symbolic, interpretation should be explored. In view of the circular shape of the building and the enclosed crypt-like character of its lowest stage, a possible alternative is a chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. It is a reasonable assumption that there would have been a great interest at Eichstätt in the cult of the Sepulchre, given the account of the Holy Land in the Life of Willibald, with its detailed description of the building on the site of Christ’s grave. 66 Admittedly, the Life does not give the information that the Sepulchre was circular, but this fact was well known from Arculf’s earlier account. The circular form was adopted in the early ninth century for the funerary chapel of St Michael at Fulda, at the centre of the Anglo-Saxon missionary network, where the recently written biography of Willibald is likely to have been known. The view is widely held that the chapel was built in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem and contained a model of the Sepulchre itself. 67

In his published doctoral dissertation Ottfried Ellger disputes this view. 68 His position is based upon a consideration of the fabric of the church and of three further items of information: the nature of the model rebuilt and finally destroyed in the restoration of 1715–16 and 1854–5; the archaeological investigations of Schalkenbach in the 1930s and further observations in the course of restoration after World War

65 Personal communication, 17 March 1995.
66 Vita Willibaldi, §4; Bauch, Quellen, pp. 58–9; Talbot, Anglo-Saxon Missionaries, pp. 165–6.
67 See, for example, the summary account of H. Hahn, ‘Fulda St. Michael’, in H. Roth and E. Wamers (eds.), in Hessen im Frühmittelalter: Archäologie und Kunst (Sigmaringen, 1984), pp. 307–8; Oswald et al., Kirchenbauten, p. 88, col. 2; D. Parsons, Books and Buildings: Architectural description before and after Bede. 30th Jarrow Lecture, 1987 (Jarrow, 1988), pp. 6–9.
68 Ellger, Michaelskirche zu Fulda.
II; and the verse inscriptions provided for the altars by Hrabanus Maurus at the time of the original dedication in the early ninth century.\

Ellger proceeds from the valid observation that the first unambiguous documentary reference to a sepulchre occurs in the record of the rededication of the church in 1092, which he prints in his selection of source material. The mention of the sepulchre does not necessarily imply, however, that it was newly constructed at this date, nor should the silence of the earlier sources be taken as proof that no such sepulchre had previously existed. Since the object itself has disappeared without any detailed record having been made, it is not possible to supplement the argument by reference to the form or style of the sepulchre. It could as well have been Carolingian as early Romanesque; for that matter, it might even have been a Gothic replacement. References to it in the secondary literature imply that it was small. It may therefore have had more in common with the (?)fifth-century miniature sepulchre-reliquary at Narbonne, to which incidentally Ellger does not refer, than with the grand Romanesque structures at such places as Echstädt or Bologna.\

The archaeological evidence might have given some clue to the date of the destroyed model, but the published information is inadequate. Schalkenbach reports the discovery of the original Carolingian plinths for the columns of the rotunda arcade and the mortar floor that butted up against them. For lack of further dating evidence it is impossible to decide whether this floor was contemporary with, or later than, the Carolingian arcade. Nor is it clear from Schalkenbach’s account

69 Ellger, Michaelskirche zu Fulda, pp. 21 and 14; Ellger refers to, but does not discuss in detail, the ‘Brotherhood Book’, an account written by Prior von Clodh of the church and his restorations in 1715–16; nor does Ellger cite G. Richter, ‘Probst Stephan von Clodh als Restaurator der St. Michaelskirche zu Fulda’, Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter 29 (1937), pp. 17–29, 77–80 and 113–126, in which parts of the Brotherhood Book are quoted verbatim, especially on p. 120, which describes the Sepulchre placed ‘most conveniently’ in the middle of the church and its replacement behind the high altar by a ‘more accurate model’ brought specifically from Jerusalem; in n. 22 Richter assumes that the original sepulchre was of some antiquity and that it would thus have been of exceptional archaeological importance, but he implies that his source does not give an adequate description of it. I am grateful to Professor Uwe Lobbedy and to Frau Fürle-Schamberger of Fulda for this important reference.

70 Ellger, Michaelskirche zu Fulda, pp. 241–3.

71 e.g. J. Schalkenbach, ‘[Die] Wiederherstellung [der Michaelskirche zu Fulda]’, Deutsche Kunst und Denkmalpflege (1938), pp. 34–48, at p. 35.

72 J. Hubert, J. Porcher and W.F. Volbach, Europe in the Dark Ages. The Arts of Mankind (London, 1969), Fig. 17 and p. 149.


whether the elliptical raised area in the centre, interpreted as the base for the sepulchre, was of the same date as the floor or a later addition. The archaeology can therefore neither confirm nor refute the late-eleventh-century date proposed by Ellger, but on the basis of the published record it is equally impossible to reject all notion of a Carolingian date.

The early-ninth-century inscription for the main alter has traditionally been interpreted as evidence for a sepulchre in the Carolingian church. The first two lines read:

\[Hoc altare deo dedicatum est maxime Christo\]
\[Cuius hic tumulus nostra sepulchra iuvat\]  

Most scholars have taken tumulus to refer to a model sepulchre of the type under discussion, but Ellger prefers to interpret it as meaning an altar tomb: the high altar was itself the ‘sepulchre’, containing relics not only of Christ’s tomb but also of other aspects of His earthly life, notably a sample of His native soil; hic takes on a more precise meaning – not simply ‘here in this church’, but more specifically ‘in this altar’. Ellger makes the point that there is no separate mention of the supposed sepulchre, nor any list of the relics it might be expected to contain, as there is for the 1092 dedication. It is certainly true that there was a great upsurge of interest in the Holy Places in the second half of the eleventh century, culminating in the First Crusade, the architectural expression of which was the construction of circular churches and of imitations of the Sepulchre constructed in this period. This would provide an impeccable context for the addition of a sepulchre to the furnishings of St Michael’s, but it does not prove that this is what actually happened. Ultimately the argument depends on the interpretation placed on the ninth-century altar titulus and the lack of any specific listing of relics in a separate sepulchre.

The concentric form of the building itself and its function as a funerary chapel might seem to be consistent with a derivation from the Holy Sepulchre church, but Ellger has a number of objections to this. There are no radiating apses at the cardinal points, there are eight, not twelve, columns in the arcade, and the church is not entered from the east (though the foundation of the sepulchre demolished in 1715–16 indicated that it was entered from the east). The crypt, intended for the ceremonial burial of the abbots of Fulda, has entirely different associations, for example with the mausoleum of Theodoric in Ravenna, and the general form of the building derives from late antique burial

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chapels, such as S. Costanza in Rome, and ultimately from the circular church marking the place of St Mary’s intended burial. Ellger provides a short excursus on round churches with Marian dedications.

There are no Marian associations in the Fulda church, however, nor is there any hint of a Holy Sepulchre invocation, except for the high altar titulus discussed above. The actual dedication of the church, to St Michael, is entirely appropriate to its funerary and commemorative function, since the archangel was seen as the guardian of souls and as a principal intercessor for them (see the medieval iconography of St Michael sheltering souls, as on the early Romanesque tympanum at Hallaton, Leicestershire). Interestingly, in the context of the present paper, Ellger sees this aspect of the cult of St Michael as a manifestation of Anglo-Saxon influence in their sphere of missionary activity. 77

It is clear, even from this superficial summary of some of Ellger’s points, that both the building and the concept of St Michael’s, Fulda, were complex, and the influences and associations eclectic and multifaceted. In the face of so much evidence and so many comparanda it would be foolish to insist on the imitation of the Holy Sepulchre as being the only or even the principal raison d’être of the church in the ninth century. On the other hand, if it is assumed that the Carolingian church had no such associations, then a good reason has to be found for the sudden introduction of a sepulchre and its associated relics in the late eleventh century – into a conveniently circular church. It should be noted that the lack of appropriate relics from the Carolingian church was not total, since those transferred from the original main altar to the new altar on the upper floor of the church included one de sepulchro Domini. It is also difficult to believe that the development of the sepulchre cult took place at exactly the time when the symbolic significance of the Carolingian rotunda had been disguised by the addition of a nave and west tower, a south quasi-transeptal annexe, and perhaps another annexe to the north, giving it a possible cruciform appearance at the time of the 1092 dedication (there was an altar of the Holy Cross in the crypt). Further, St Michael’s now had to serve the community of a priority, which must have detracted somewhat from its original significance as a cemetery chapel; indeed there had been only one burial in the crypt of the church since the interment of Abbot Eigil, its founder, in June 822. The loss of this function, which would have made the postulated Holy Sepulchre such an appropriate feature, renders the introduction of an unprecedented Sepulchre cult in the late eleventh century more difficult to accept. On balance, therefore, it seems justifiable to take the hint of the ninth-century altar titulus and

77 Ellger, Michaelskirche zu Fulda, pp. 76–8.
to see its allusion to the Holy Sepulchre as one of a number of strands in a complete web of theological, devotional, and architectural associations already developing in the Carolingian period.

St Michael’s, Fulda, then, may be tentatively suggested as a *comparandum* for the circular building at Eichstätt, though, as Ellger has shown, there can be no proof that it had a symbolic Sepulchre function in the Carolingian period. In the Romanesque period, however, a closer comparison can be made. At Fulda there is the 1092 reference to an imitation of the Holy Sepulchre, while at Eichstätt there was in the ‘Schottenkirche’ (Irish church) a Romanesque model sepulchre of elliptical form, later re-erected in the Capuchin church there.

The Eichstätt rotunda: some further considerations

The suggested use of the sunken part of the circular building at Eichstätt as a symbolic Holy Sepulchre would have been highly appropriate in view of Sage’s interpretation of the building immediately to its west, which was on the same axis and broadly contemporary with it. It was of light construction, perhaps with a timber superstructure, and laid out in the form of a semi-circle. The internal arrangements were unusual, but understanding of the feature was limited because of the construction of the Baroque altar to St Willibald in the middle of it. Sage suggests continuity of the Willibald cult in this part of the site from the early medieval period to the present. The saint was translated in 989 from the middle of the choir to a crypt (*in criptam*), which Sage interprets as a reference to the semi-circular building. However, in 1060 the Willibald altar was in the middle of the choir again (still?), but in 1074 a crypt with a Willibald altar was dedicated; the saint’s remains were moved once again in 1256 to the choir of St Mary and finally in 1269 into the newly constructed west choir. This sequence of events hardly supports Sage’s claim for continuity of the cult in one particular part of the cathedral, though the west end was generally the preferred location for founders’ memorials. Jacobsen takes the view that none of the locations before 1269 was at the west end of the church. In view of the limited nature of the archaeological evidence it is difficult

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78 Note the similar shape of the raised platform demolished in St Michael’s, Fulda, in the 1930s: Schalkenbach, ‘Wiederherstellung’, p. 38.
83 Personal communication, 17 March 1995; for the sequence, see Jacobsen et al., *Nachtragsband*, p. 107.

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to propose an alternative interpretation for the semi-circular building at Eichstätt. The structure is without parallel, and invites unconventional interpretations. Was it some sort of memorial building, or at least an open courtyard (‘paradise’) with a memoria at its crown? If this were the case, might it have been the final resting place of Willibald’s brother, Wynnebald, whose remains were translated to Eichstätt in 776 (their sister, Walburga, also translated in 870 × 879, was enshrined in the church of Holy Cross)? In such a context, with its entrance facing the semi-circular feature, the basement of the circular building might well have had a funerary aspect, and an interpretation as a Holy Sepulchre is not out of the question. Equally, of course, it might itself have been Wynnebald’s shrine.

The dating of these structures to the west of the apparently Carolingian cathedral is problematic. They are conventionally associated with the documented completion of a building campaign in 989. This date is given in a number of sources, but is described by the Anonymus Haserensis, an eleventh-century author, as being 186 years after the depositio of St Willibald. Fabian has recently argued that this must refer to a translation of the saint, rather than his original interment, and therefore assumes an otherwise unrecorded translation in 803 at the time of the completion of a cathedral building by Bishop Gerhoh. This interesting suggestion offers a new context for the interpretation of the circular turriform building. A date for that building slightly earlier than the postulated translation would be particularly interesting, since the establishment of a Holy Sepulchre cult centre is more likely to have taken place under the direct influence of St Willibald himself or shortly after his death in 787. His interest in the Holy Places is clearly demonstrated in his Life, the material for which was dictated not long before his death; the record of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land some sixty years earlier forms a substantial part of the narrative. A Holy Sepulchre chapel would have been an appropriate memorial to him, and would have a significant context at any date between 787 and 803. Such a date would also make it a near contemporary with St Michael at Fulda, which was dedicated in 822.

Can such a suggestion be reconciled with the archaeological and architectural evidence? Stratigraphically the circular and semi-circular buildings are later in date than what is interpreted as the earliest monastic church, over whose destruction levels they were built. An absolute date for this at the end of the eighth or the beginning of the

84 Jacobsen et al., Nachtragsband, p. 107.
85 Heidingsfelder, Regesten, no. 139.
86 Fabian, Dom zu Eichstätt, pp. 17–18.
ninth century is not impossible. Finds of pottery in the construction levels are not closely datable, but are regarded as ‘no later than the tenth century’, which could as easily support the proposed date as the conventionally accepted c. 989. In terms of the architectural interpretation of the site, the revised Munich corpus entry has a plan which suggests that the circular building was not free standing, as Sage implied, but part of the west end of an extended cathedral church. To the south of the nave of this church are two parallel east–west rows of padstone bases, which Sage suggested might have formed part of a cloister walk. The corpus reinterprets these as respond bases on either side of a south aisle, intended to support diaphragm arches across the aisle. This feature cannot date before the tenth century, and the whole complex of aisles (a corresponding northern aisle is assumed) and circular turrisiform building is referred to the documented extension westwards of the cathedral under Bishop Reginold (966–91). If this interpretation of the excavated features proves to be correct, the suggested earlier dating cannot be sustained. The question must remain open pending the publication of Sage’s detailed final excavation report.

Solnhofen: the monastery church

Excavations were carried out within the remains of the medieval church in 1961–6 and resumed in 1974; further excavations in the garden adjoining the present parish church concluded in 1979. The original excavation report identified seven phases of development from a small double-apsed building of c. 600 to a basilica with a crypt, which was assumed to be the church dedicated in 819. The first three phases, Milojčić VII, VI and V, were thought to precede the arrival of the Anglo-Saxon Sola, probably in the late 750s; phase IV, a scatter of postholes at the east end of the surviving nave, was interpreted as a temporary church built by Sola, followed by a definitive stone building of two phases (III and II) in the second half of the eighth century. In phase III this church consisted of a rectangular nave with the eastern quarter of its length divided off by a partition with a broad, presumably arched, opening. The east wall had been destroyed, and Milojčić reconstructed the plan of the church with an apse. On the evidence of surviving areas of flooring, this church appears to have been extended west to almost double its original length in phase II; a new east wall, of

91 Milojčić, ‘Propstei Solnhofen’.
slighter construction, had a narrow central opening, and short stretches of east–west wall flanking this opening indicate a small, possibly square, chancel (Fig. 8). This church was ultimately replaced by a larger building, whose nave still survives in part.

Since the publication of this report, Milojčić’s interpretations have been revised in a number of respects. His posthole church (phase IV) has been reinterpreted by Marzolff as timber screens, perhaps marking the position of a choir, in the phase III church,92 though Milojčić had thought the postholes stratigraphically earlier than phase III. Jacobsen et al. still provisionally regard the posthole structure as a church and place it before phase III.93

The greatest uncertainty has surrounded the final building on the site (Milojčić’s phase I; see Fig. 9). Jacobsen in several contributions to the supplementary volume of the Munich corpus and in a telling footnote to his recent St Gallen publication94 argues for an eleventh-century date. Part of his case rests on the style of the nave capitals and fragments of stucco decoration and on the form of the windows. Sculpture specialists may judge the new dating proposed for the capitals and stucco, but one at least of the capitals seems to resemble the debased Ionic forms of the late eighth and early ninth centuries. It is conceivable that it was reused, though the excavations did not reveal an earlier basilican church from which it could have come. Any reassessment must take into account the character of the painted decoration on the nave north wall. It is difficult to set aside the opinion of so respected a scholar as Bernhard Bischoff, who suggested a probable date of late eighth to early ninth century for the mural painting,95 but recent investigations have tended to support the eleventh-century dating.96

The crypt to the east of this nave is also the subject of much uncertainty (Fig. 10). Its similarity to the crypts of the Petersberghirche, Fulda, and of Schluchtern, only twenty-five kilometres south-west of Fulda, was pointed out over thirty years ago.97 Although Lehmann assumed that all these examples dated from after the death of Charlemagne, he regarded them as forming a group of Fulda dependencies expressing in their later architectural development a common heritage as sites of the Anglo-Saxon mission. Not surprisingly, Milojčić

92 Spindler, Denkmäler und Fundstätten, p. 157.
93 Jacobsen et al., Nachtragsband p. 393.
94 Jacobsen et al., Nachtragsband pp. 329, 374 and 392; Jacobsen, Klosterplan, p. 119, n. 56.
accepted his assessment.\textsuperscript{98} As a result of his redating of the nave, however, Jacobsen puts the crypt at Solnhofen in the eleventh century, and links it to a recorded dedication in 1065/71.\textsuperscript{99} He also discusses the comparanda at Schlu¨chtern and the Petersberg. At Schlu¨chtern the traditional foundation date for the monastery is 1018, and the building is not likely to predate that. There are earlier references in the literature that may relate to Schlu¨chtern, but they give no particular reason for assuming a church on the site before the foundation of the monastery. Chronologically, therefore, the Schlu¨chtern and Solnhofen crypts may be compared, assuming the recently proposed eleventh-century date, though typologically only the western cross passage is a common feature.\textsuperscript{100}

The case of the Petersberg church is more difficult, however. It is accepted that the east wall of the crypt and the whole of the choir were rebuilt at an unknown date and are therefore not part of the building completed in 836–8.\textsuperscript{101} The possible ninth-century date of the remainder of the crypt cannot be lightly dismissed in view of the dendrochronological evidence. A timber-lined recess in the west wall, now shown to be contemporary with the surrounding masonry, was sampled, and four out of five determinations fell within the bracket

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{solnhofen_plan.png}
\caption{Solnhofen: composite plan of Milojčić’s phases III (lighter tone) and II (darker tone).}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{98} Milojčić, ‘Propstei Solnhofen’, p. 302.
\textsuperscript{99} Jacobsen, \textit{Klosterplan}, p. 119, n. 56.
\textsuperscript{100} Schlu¨chtern ‘is not a good comparative example’, according to Professor Uwe Lobbedey (personal communication, 28 March 1997). He regards the Solnhofen crypt as ‘basically Carolingian’.
\textsuperscript{101} Oswald \textit{et al.}, \textit{Kirchenbauten}, p. 257.
826–42, with a centre date of 834.\textsuperscript{102} There is no doubt that the west wall of the crypt is therefore also of this date, and Jacobsen has to postulate a replacement of the crypt to which it belonged by the present structure; this he regards as secondary and the rebuilt east wall as tertiary. Elsewhere, however, an allusion to this crypt in the description of that as Echternach serves to confuse the issue still further. The arrangement of the Echternach crypt chambers is described as ‘a further development of the Petersberg system’, and is dated c. 940.\textsuperscript{103} This implies an earlier dating for the Petersberg plan, if not for all the upstanding walling. A thorough investigation of the building would be needed to resolve this unsatisfactory situation, and no such examination can take place because of the early medieval plaster with traces of

\textsuperscript{102} E. Hollstein, \textit{Mitteleuropäische Eichenechronologie}. Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier: Trierer Grabungen und Forschungen 11 (Mainz, 1980), p. 109. This recess is frequently interpreted as the coffin of Lioba, Boniface’s kinswoman and abbess of Tauberbischofsheim, who died in 782 and whose remains were translated to the Petersberg church in 838. A recent reconsideration of investigations in 1970 has established, however, that the feature is not a coffin, but a reliquary chamber: H. Claussen, ‘Eine Reliquiennische in der Krypta auf dem Petersberg bei Fulda’, \textit{Frühmittelalterliche Studien} 21 (1987), pp. 245–72. This reinterpretation does not, however, affect the chronological argument.

\textsuperscript{103} Jacobsen \textit{et al.}, \textit{Nachtragsband}, pp. 103 and 105.
original painting still adhering to much of the interior. The exact date of both the plaster and the painting is disputed, though the plaster on the west wall was shown to be integral with the construction of the timber recess. For the time being there seems no objective reason for abandoning the early-ninth-century dating for the Petersberg crypt, and the discrepancy between this and Jacobsen’s proposed date for the Solnhofen crypt is something of an embarrassment. A grain of hope is offered by Marzolff, who regards the crypt at Solnhofen as earlier than the nave. It is unlikely, however, that a difference of 200 years can be explained away in this manner. Marzolff himself puts the crypt into the same overall building phase as the nave, and its dedication is not likely to have been delayed until the nave was ready. The normal sequence is the dedication the east end as soon as it is fit for liturgical use, with the less important nave following later. It is difficult therefore to argue against Jacobsen’s conclusion that the recorded dedication in 1065/71 refers to the crypt. This proposed redating of the church marks a return to the position before 1958, when Beutler argued in detail for a Carolingian date for the building. It leads to difficulties when the documentary evidence is taken into consideration. Later evidence,

Fig. 10 Solnhofen: reconstruction plan of the crypt in relation to the outer walls of the nave (after Milojčić, ‘Propstei Solnholfen’). Sola’s tomb is placed against the north wall of the church (compare Heidenheim, Fig. 3).

104 Spindler, Denkmäler und Fundstätten, pp. 158–9.
quoted *in extenso* by Beutler, refers to the dedication of a church in 819.\textsuperscript{106} If the structure that partly survives (Milojćić I) is not that church, then the dedication must refer to the next structure in the stratigraphic sequence (Milojćić II), the extended aisleless church currently associated with the development of the site in the 790s. However, this interpretation falls foul of the evidence in the *Life* of Sola, in which his translation in c. 838 is described.\textsuperscript{107} His remains were disinterred and relocated in a tomb at a higher level, but in almost exactly the same place. This was on the north side of the church, and the description of the odour of sanctity filling the whole church implies that it was inside the building. The excavated plan of the phase II church\textsuperscript{108} shows that the saint’s tomb lay outside, not inside the building; it is an interior feature only in relation to the phase I church, which must therefore still be a strong candidate for the church dedicated in 819. There is thus still some uncertainty about the real date of this building and its crypt, and a Carolingian date must continue to be regarded as possible until there is full publication of the recent investigations.

**Discussion**

This review makes clear the dearth of tangible archaeological evidence for the activities of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in south-central Germany, in stark contrast to the artefactual and manuscript evidence. Only one site in the study area has any of the characteristics identified in my earlier paper;\textsuperscript{109} this is the Willibaldsburg near Eichstätt, where the topography and later use of the ridge suggest a possible use in the first ecclesiastical colonization of the area. There is, however, little hard archaeological evidence. At Heidenheim the earliest architectural remains date from about a century after the deaths of the Anglo-Saxon heads of the monastic house; in any case the limited amount of information revealed by excavation does not allow any conclusions to be reached about the nature of the church building. Erfurt’s association with the mission depends entirely on documentary evidence, together with general topographical observations; there is no archaeological evidence for any structures earlier than the churches which now occupy the two hilltop sites.

More positively, Sage’s excavations at Eichstätt have identified what appear to be the church and precinct wall of the earliest monastery

\textsuperscript{106} Beutler, ‘Grab’, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{107} *Vita Sualonis*, §10; Bauch, *Quellen*, p. 233.
\textsuperscript{108} Milojćić, ‘Propstei Solnhofen’, Beilage 38.
\textsuperscript{109} Parsons, ‘Sites and Monuments’.

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complex, and these must date to the mid-eighth century. The apsed and possibly basilican church does not immediately suggest Anglo-Saxon influence, since this is not a plan form typical of eighth-century churches in England. To the east of this complex Sage identified a building which he regarded as Willibald’s cathedral, but the earliest – probably eighth-century – phase was incomplete, so that its full extent and its eastern termination are not known, and comparisons cannot therefore be made. The next building phase, to the west of the (possibly extended) cathedral, has been dated to the tenth century, and although an earlier date has been suggested above, there is nothing objectively to link it with even the end of the Anglo-Saxon missionary period. The two major elements of this building phase, the circular turrisform building and the semi-circular feature to its west, are without close parallels either in Anglo-Saxon England or elsewhere. A tentative association with the English missionaries depends on the interpretation of the lower part of the circular structure as an imitation of the Holy Sepulchre and Willibald’s close interest in the Holy Land, as revealed in his Life. Considerable doubt has been cast on the existence of model sepulchres before the eleventh century, the date which is now put forward for the development of the cult at Fulda St Michael; even if it could be substantiated as an original feature, the dedication date of St Michael’s in 822 puts it firmly into the post-mission period. As to the overall layout of the monastic/cathedral precinct at Eichstätt, the line of the enclosing vallum preserved in the street plan of the present town is regarded as early medieval, but no closer dating is possible for lack of any archaeological evidence. Once again, there is no justification for associating this feature with the Anglo-Saxon missionaries.

There are similar difficulties in the interpretation and dating of the excavated churches at Solnhofen. Notwithstanding the recent proposal of a late-eleventh-century date for the church which still survives in part (Milojčić’s building I), it is contended above that there are still reasons for accepting the early-ninth-century date for which Beutler argued in 1958. This allows the comparison with the Fulda Petersberg crypt, dated c. 836, to be maintained. However, with the removal of Schlüchtern from the equation this hardly provides the basis for a ‘Fulda school’ of satellite churches as suggested by Lehmann. Even if such a notion could be entertained, the date of its emergence would place it in the third or fourth generation after the original Anglo-Saxon missionary activity, by which time any Insular contribution to its design would be questionable. In particular, since the crypts form the point of comparison, the lack of any crypt of this type in eighth- or ninth-century England must tell against the assumption of Anglo-Saxon influence. The previous church at Solnhofen (Milojčić II) is
commonly associated with the development of the site as a monastic cell of Fulda following the death of Sola in 794, at which date some Insular influence might still be expected. The excavator’s reconstruction of this building as a long, narrow, aisleless nave with a narrower, possibly square, chancel invites comparison with Anglo-Saxon churches of the Escomb type. Such comparisons have frequently been made by continental scholars, despite Boeckelmann’s attempt in the 1950s to characterize this plan form as ‘culturally neutral’. More recently this view has been reinforced by Stoepker on the basis of far more evidence than was available to Boeckelmann. The building out of which church II grew may well have been constructed in Sola’s lifetime (Milojčić III), but apart from being aisleless has no features with Anglo-Saxon connotations. In particular, the chancel consists of the eastern one-third of an essentially rectangular building screened off from the nave, both elements being of equal width. This plan form is not represented in Anglo-Saxon England. There is doubt as to whether the preceding phase, Milojčić IV, was a timber building, some form of internal structure or simply scaffolding, though the excavator noted that posts had been replaced, some of them more than once, which implies at least a semi-permanent structure. If this was a timber church and if it could be shown to be associated with Sola, the comparisons would nevertheless be with large numbers of continental examples rather than with the few early wooden churches excavated in England.

One plan element not encountered in the area under review is inverse orientation, except perhaps in the case of the interpretation of the upper level of the circular building at Eichstätt as a western apse. This was put forward in 1983 as a possible common feature in a number of churches of Bonifacian origin, with the suggestion that latent influence from the mission period might have been responsible for this development. The Anglo-Saxon missionaries were staunchly loyal to the Holy See and strongly attracted to things Roman; their successors in Fulda made a deliberate attempt to recreate the forms characteristic of Old St Peter’s when extending the church and rearranging the monastic buildings in the early ninth century. Nothing comparable was attempted in the Altmühl valley, so that there is no

112 Parsons, ‘Sites and Monuments’.
further support for the hypothesis put forward previously. Meanwhile doubt has been cast on the nature of the evidence at Fritzlar and Mainz St John, so that Fulda begins to look increasingly like an isolated example, best explained perhaps in the traditional way as a direct product of the Carolingian renaissance.

When it comes to matters of Church institutions and organization, the evidence of contemporary documents suggests that the Anglo-Saxon missionaries continued to work within the framework being established in England at a formative stage in their careers. Central to the organization of the early Anglo-Saxon church was the seemingly paradoxical association of pastoral care with monastic foundations, which had been characteristic of the Augustinian mission from the first, and which was to lead to that very English institution, the monastic cathedral. As pastoral care was devolved in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries to more local centres, the monastic overtones remained, giving rise to present-day scholarly debate on the meaning of the terms used in the documents and on whether ‘monastery’ or ‘minster’ is the better translation of *monasterium* in any particular case. A key example of this tension is Brecon on the Hill (Leicestershire), where the house was founded between AD 675 and 691 with the specific task of converting and baptizing the population assigned to it, but nevertheless with an apparently monastic constitution. This monastery/minster was established at about the time when Willibrord was preparing for his departure to the Frisian mission field in 690 and when Boniface and his contemporaries were beginning their monastic education. This and other houses like it would have represented the normative form of organization for the still proselytizing Church. Against such a background it is hardly surprising to find Willibald carrying out his episcopal duties from his monastery in Eichstätt. Archaeologically, the public function of his ‘cathedral’ church is attested by the densely packed cemetery to its south, which contained burials of females and children, and may therefore be regarded as serving the lay, rather than the monastic, population.

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tation of the turiform circular building as a baptistry has been rejected and would in any case not apply to the earlier phases of the buildings on the site; there is no evidence for the exercise of the bishop’s baptismal function in the Willibald period. Institutionally, Eichstadt was at the centre of a cluster of monasteries, though whether these should be regarded as monastic dependencies or as pastoral satellites is a moot point.

Another house at the centre of a group of satellites was (by implication) Sülzenbrücken, from which Wynnebald controlled seven churches, according to his Life. The troublesome word monasterium is not used of these foundations, and their description as aecclésiae allows their interpretation as secular outposts in an extensive regio whose minster was at Sülzenbrücken. The public nature of the church there is suggested by its suitability as the location of Willibald’s consecration as bishop.

The status and function of the churches at Heidenheim and Solnhofen are less clear, however. There are suggestions that there was an earlier church at Heidenheim and that the monastery headed by Wynnebald and Walburga did not have a primary missionary function (though Wynnebald is claimed to have performed baptisms at a local holy well).116 The slight archaeological evidence does not include anything such as burials or a baptistery to suggest a secular rather than a monastic function. By contrast there is plenty of evidence at Solnhofen for both ecclesiastical and secular occupation of the site before the arrival of Sola between 744 and 754. Milojčić identified three masonry churches (VII, VI, V) in the period from the early seventh to the mid-eighth century, indicating that Christianity was established in the area well before the Anglo-Saxon mission. Burials were subsequently found in the north aisle of the ‘Sola basilica’ and in the garden to the north; these have been provisionally associated with the phase V building.117 The presence of many infant graves in this densely packed cemetery suggests public use and a parochial or quasi-parochial function for the pre-Sola church(es). However, this function does not seem to have continued into the later eighth century and the subsequent period. Church V appears to have stood in ruins for some time before the building activity attributed to Sola, and there may have been an interruption of Christian practice in the area. On the other hand, the priory church that developed from the end of the eighth century did not assume parochial functions until 1544, when the parish church

116 Spindler, Denkmäler und Fundstätten, p. 90.
of St Vitus, whose incumbents are attested from the thirteenth century, was deconsecrated. This church stood to the east of the priory site, and it is possible that church V was abandoned in favour of the future parish church site, leaving a vacuum for Sola to fill when he established his hermitage. From the date of his death the hermitage became fully monastic as a cell of Fulda until the Reformation. Nevertheless, it has been claimed that the basilican church (Milojčić I) had a ‘baptismal arrangement’ on the axis line towards the west end of the nave. The plan shows a trefoil-shaped feature in the relevant position, but there is no further information given, so that no interpretation is possible.

The overall picture which emerges is uneven. At Eichstätt and Sülzenbrücken there were churches in the eighth century which appear to fit into the framework of the Anglo-Saxon minster with its dependencies, combining secular and monastic functions. At Eichstätt, Solnhofen and possibly Heidenheim there had been ecclesiastical use of the site before the English missionaries’ arrival, though at both Eichstätt and Solnhofen there is evidence for an interruption before the establishment of an Anglo-Saxon religious house, and the missionaries’ purpose may have been more the confirmation of the faith than the conversion of the heathen. Neither at Heidenheim nor at Solnhofen is there any tangible evidence for a public as opposed to a monastic function. As far as the buildings are concerned, there is nothing that can be attributed to the Anglo-Saxon presence without an amount of special pleading, and the English mission remains both archaeologically and architecturally as invisible as ever.

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118 Spindler, Archäologie und Geschichte, p. 239.
119 Spindler, Denkmäler und Fundstätten, p. 160 and illustration 70.