

- I. *An Account of an antient Shrine, formerly belonging to the Abbey of Croyland; by Wm. Stukely M. D. Coll. Med. Lond. Soc. & Eccles. D. Georgii Martyr. Lond. Rector.*

Read Dec. 8.
1748.

THE Shrine before us is a great Curiosity. Few of this kind of Antiquities escap'd the general Ravage of the Dissolution of Abbeyes: For which Reason I thought it would be an agreable Amusement to the *Society* to have a View of it; and to preserve a Drawing of it as in TAB. I. and II. The Shrine is made of Oak, plated over with Copper, upon which the Figures are chased in Gold: The Ground is enamel'd with blue; in the Ridge along the Top are three oval Chrystals set transparently; its Dimensions are as expressed under the Print.

Mr. *Eayre* of *St. Neots* sent it to me to have my Opinion of it. It was found in the Houe of a Gentleman of that Neighbourhood, who never shew'd it during his Life-time; and who possibly might have given us some Account, as to the History of it; and at present we have no means left of finding it out, but by Conjecture.

I conceive it came from *Croyland-Abbey*. There was an Intercourse between this Abbey and *St. Neot's* Priory; insomuch that *St. Neot's* Body was carried hence to *Croyland-Abbey*, and inshrined there.

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These Shrines were made for receiving Reliques of Saints, in old Abbeys, Churches, and Cathedrals. (See a Print in the History of *Canterbury*, and in *Dugdale's Monasticon*, of the high Altar of the Church of *St. Augustin* there; no less than thirteen of these Shrines standing around). These were carried about in Processions on their anniversary Days; sometimes embellished with Jewels of inestimable Value. Besides these portable ones, there were others, built of Stone, Marble, and other Materials; like that of *St. Edward the Confessor* in *Westminster-Abbey*; one now in *Chester Cathedral* of *St. Werburga*, whereon the episcopal Throne is set, adorn'd with Sculptures of *Saxon Kings* and Saints: One of *St. Thomas de Cantelupe* Bishop of *Hereford*, in that Cathedral. These now remain. There was one in the Church of *Burton-Coggles; Lincolnshire*; and of *Heckington* in the same County; and innumerable others, destroy'd at the Dissolution of Monasteries.

The Shrine before us, from the Manner of drawing, and Workmanship, I conclude to be of *Saxon* Antiquity, and that very high; now near 900 Years old. I think it gives us the Story of the Murder of the Abbot there, and his Monks, perpetrated by the barbarous *Danes*, in the Year 870.

Sept. 25. that Year, they rush'd into the Church of *Croyland*, whilst the Religious were at divine Service. *Ingulphus*, Abbot of the Place, in his History, gives us this Account. Lord *Theodore* was then Abbot of *Croyland*; who at that time pontifically officiated at the high Altar, expecting the Barbarians. King *Osketyl* cut off his Head upon the Altar. *Verus Martyr et Christi hostia immolatur*, says

says our Author, *Ministri circumstantes omnes capitibus detruncati*: “ Thus fell the true Martyr and “ Lamb of Christ, as a Sacrifice on the Altar. All “ the assistant Ministers were beheaded likewise,” says he.

The two on our Shrine are Frier *Elfget* the Deacon, and Frier *Savin* the Subdeacon.

Some Days after, when the Monks that fled returned, they found the Body of the venerable Abbot *Theodore* beheaded at the Altar.

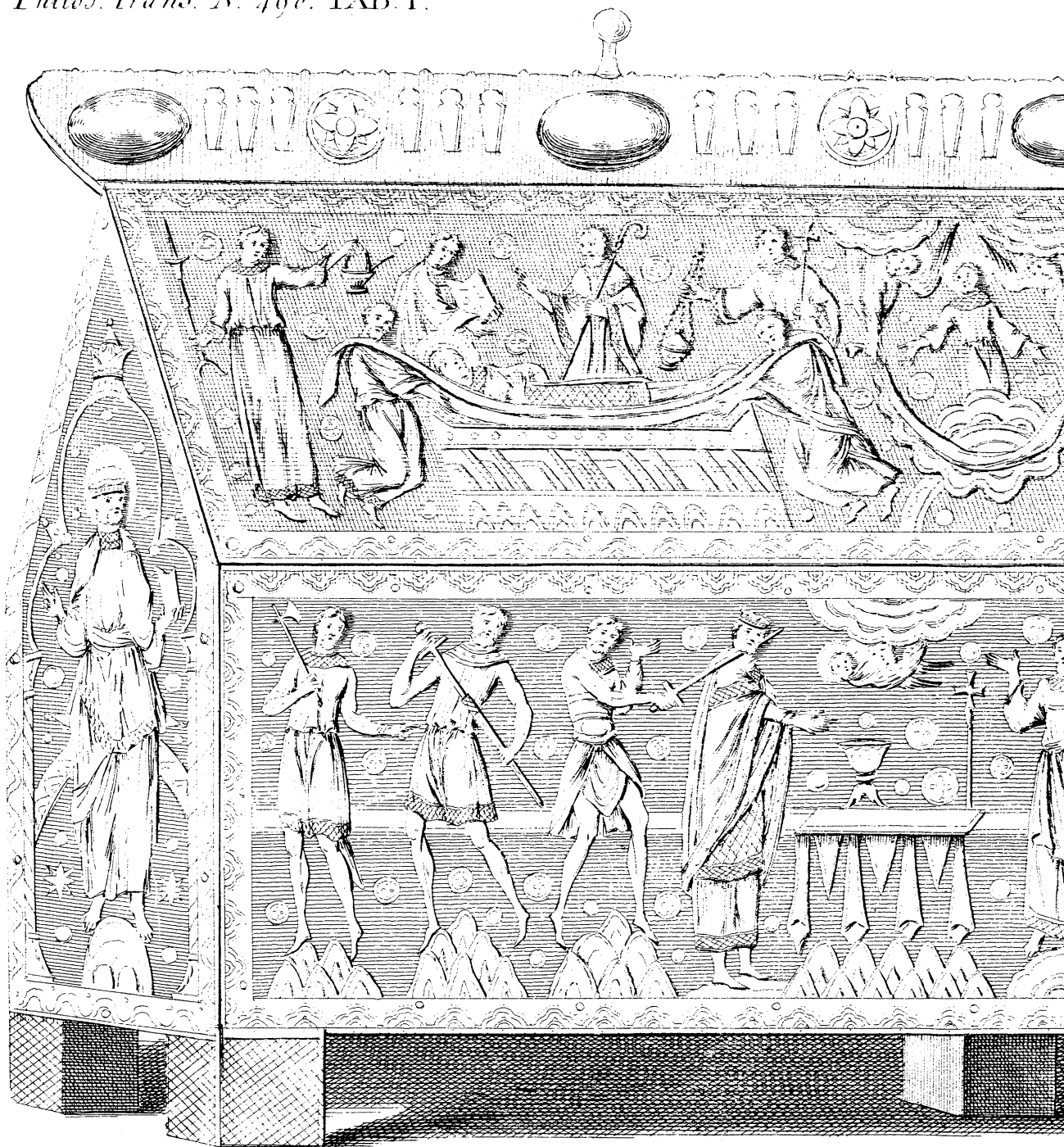
Above is represented his Successor Abbot *Godric*, with the Ministers about him, putting the deceased Abbot into his Shroud; whilst Angels are carrying his Soul up to Heaven.

I suppose some Part of this Martyr might be obtained, and kept in this Shrine.

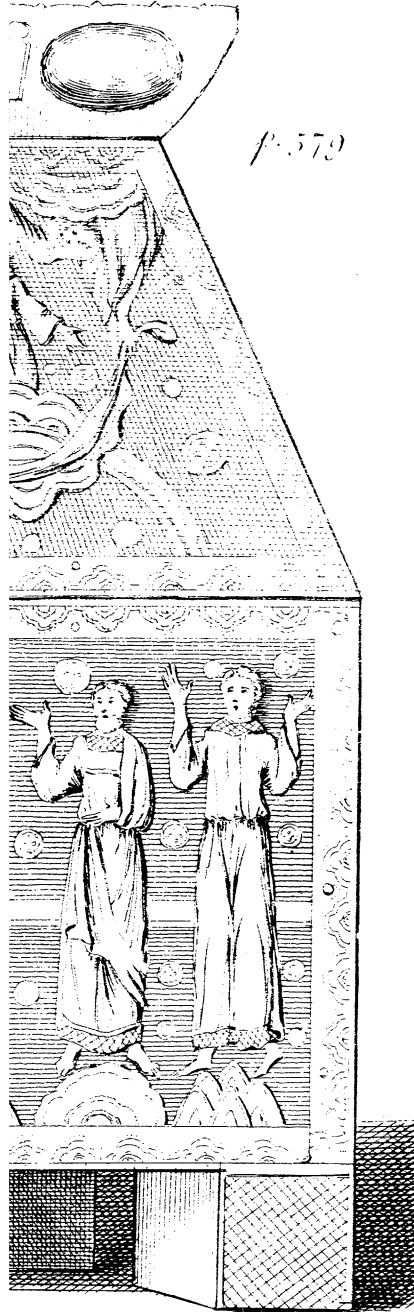
I observe the famous old sepulchral Stone in *Peterborough* Minster-Yard, is exactly of the same Shape as our Shrine. It was set up over the Grave of the Abbot and Monks murder'd by the same *Danes*, the Day after those of *Croyland-Abbey* suffer'd, *Sept. 26*. It is carv'd on the Sides with the Images of our Saviour and the Apostles. It is now remov'd into the Library.

Nov. 23. 1748.

W. Stukely.



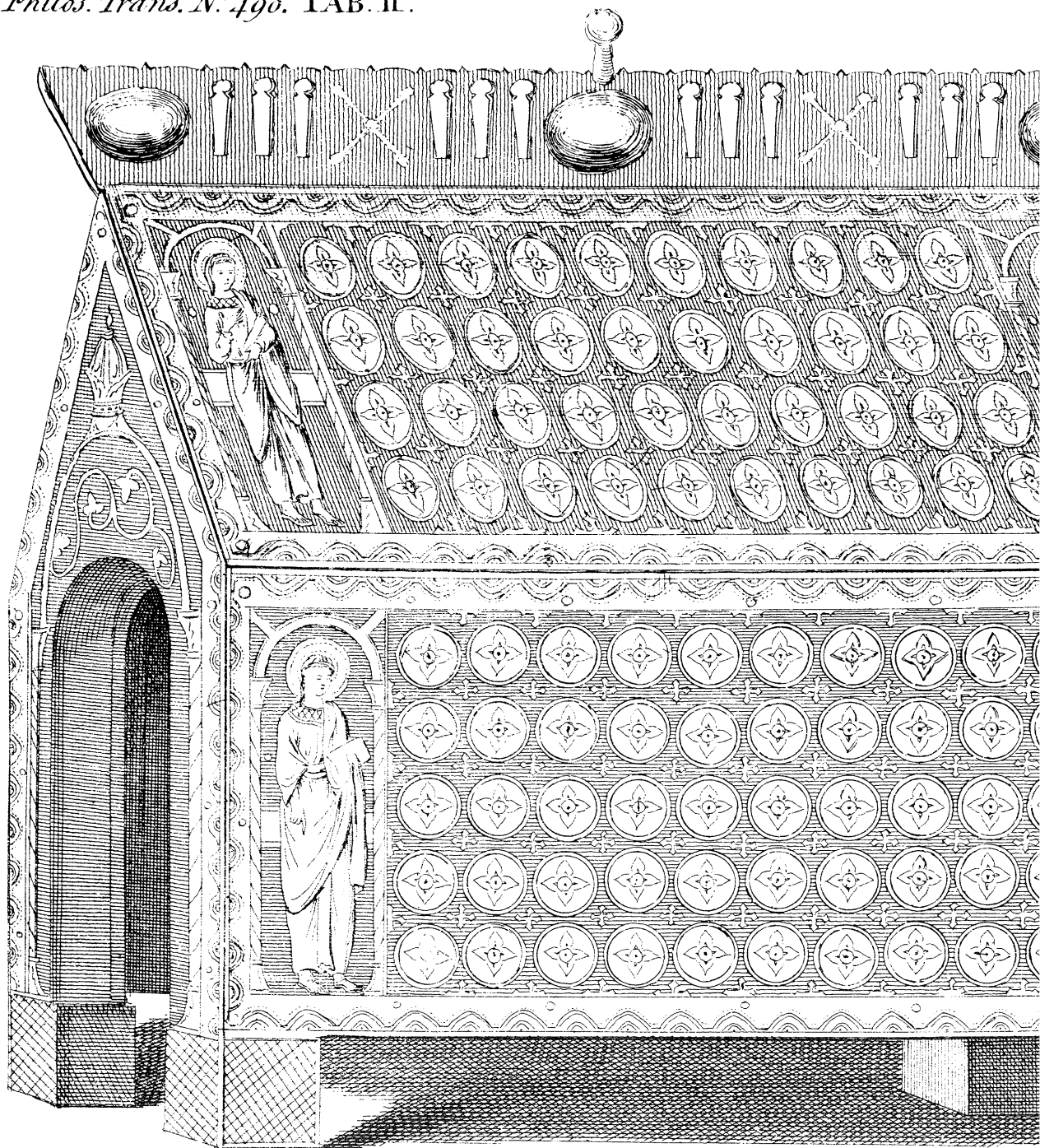
*A most antient Sbrine, of curious enamel'd work, on Copper, is
12 inches long 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ high 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ broad.*



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J. Mynde sc.

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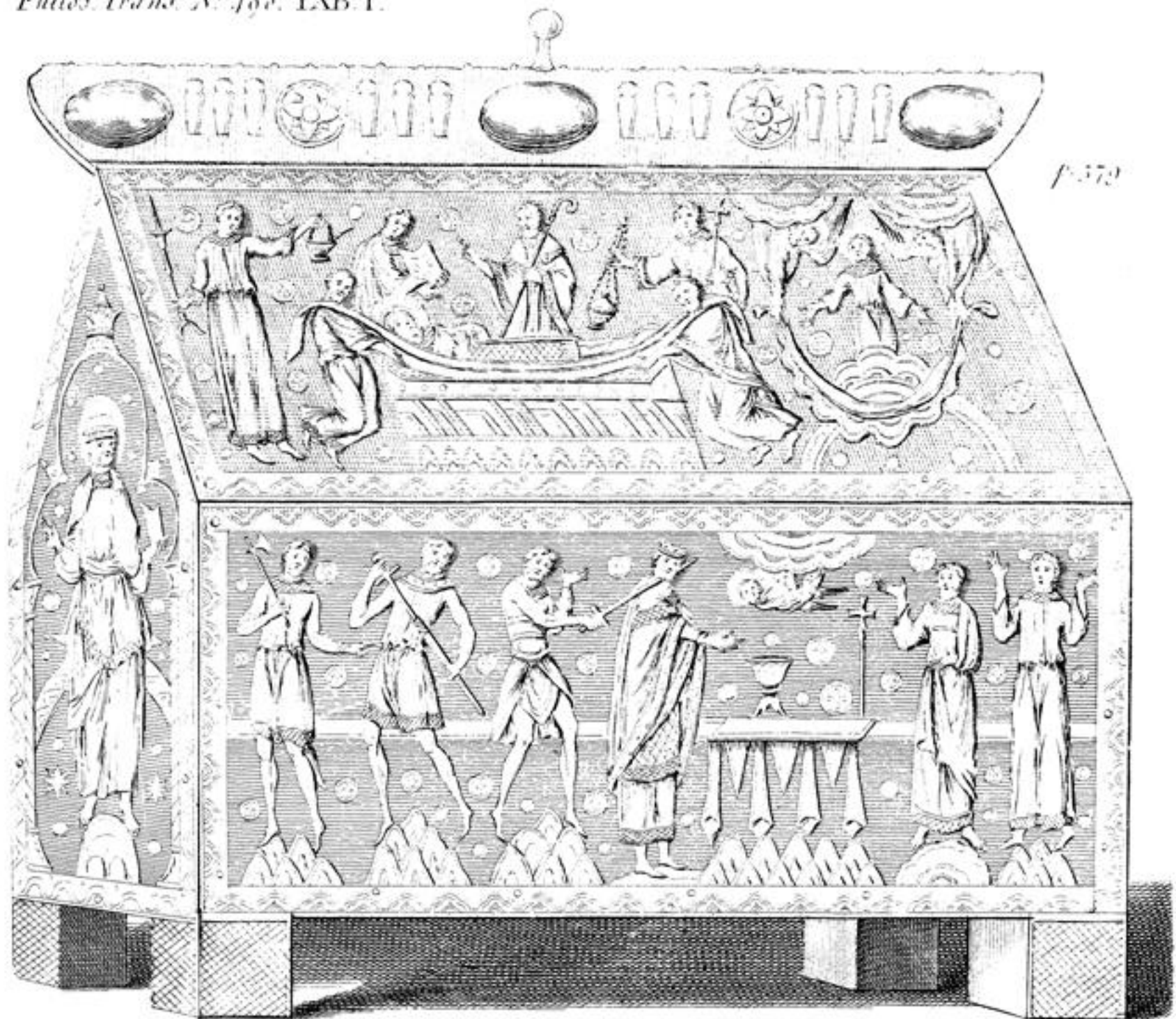


*The Backside of the Shrine. This elegant Antiquity is in Possession
of S^r John Cotton Baronet. 1748.*



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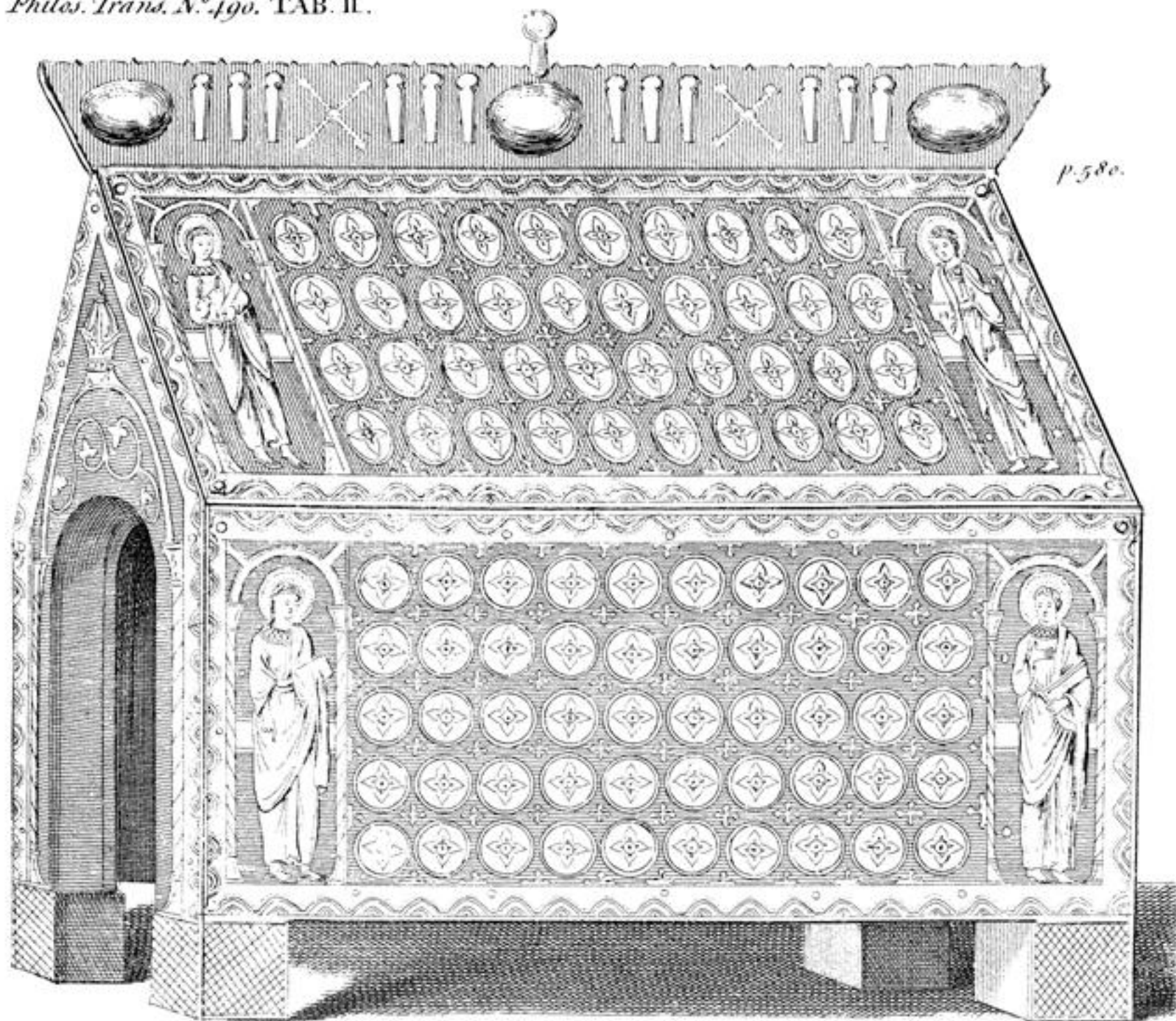
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