

#### 4. Lollardy and the Establishment backlash, 1382 - 1425

##### 4.1. The Lollard assault

The last twenty years of the 14th century witnessed the confrontation of the Church in England by a phenomenon which had not troubled it for centuries - the emergence of a widespread, persistent and popularly supported heresy. The details of the careers, doctrines and influence of John Wyclif and his Lollard followers need not be rehearsed here.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to say that one of the principal platforms of Lollardy was its attack on what was seen as the diversion of the church's resources away from its proper duties of pastoral care, preaching the Gospel, and the saving of souls, and toward the maintenance of far too many expensive, unholy and pernicious luxuries unsupported by scriptural authority. Not only did wealthy orders of monks, absentee bishops and pluralist civil servants come in for Lollard abuse, therefore. So also did the elaborate and - to Lollards- formal and empty outward trappings of worship, as required by the liturgical ordinals.<sup>2</sup> The elaborate and expensive ceremonial, the ritual chanting in a foreign language, the diversion of scores of ordained priests away from pastoral work among the people into spiritually sterile vicarages choral and chaplaincies in cathedrals, colleges and chantries, all alike seemed indefensible. The former were hindrances to true devotion, creating a gap between souls and the scriptures, their true means of Salvation; the latter were a vain dissipation of the church's resources in man-power. Contemporary worship was not merely a harmless waste of time therefore - it was the work of the Devil, a wicked and pernicious squandering of resources and effort, for which far more profitable and constructive uses could have been found. "Song and þe ordynal of salisbury" constituted two of the four "sathenas disceitis" which Satan threw into the fight against those saving instruments, the "foure Evangelistis".<sup>3</sup>

In his Latin works, Wyclif's own condemnations of the manner of divine worship were relatively moderate.<sup>4</sup> It is in the vernacular

- 
1. K.B. Macfarlane, Wycliffe and English Non-conformity, was much used in the compilation of the following passages.
  2. Especially as required by the newly-revised 'Ordinal Welwyk' of Salisbury Use, the use of which was being pressed on parochial clergy at this time - see K. Edwards, "The Cathedral Church of Salisbury," VCH Wiltshire, vol.3 p.173 and references there cited.
  3. ed. F.D. Matthew, Unprinted works of John Wyclif, p.187
  4. There is mild condemnation of contemporary liturgies in his "De oracione et ecclesie purgacione" of c.1383, on the grounds that they were without scriptural authority, and substituted formal praying and singing for genuine spontaneous prayer:- ed. R. Buddensieg, Latin Polemical Works of John Wiclif, vol.1, p.345

treatises (compiled probably by his disciples rather than by Wyclif himself) that are to be found the really thorough, vigorous and abusive denunciations of contemporary worship, to which the governing classes so sharply reacted. Close analysis of the practices that were subjected to this stinging abuse sheds some interesting light on the role of music, especially polyphonic music, in late 14th century worship in cathedrals, collegiate churches and household chapels.

The Lollards denounced the dedication of time and energy on the mammoth task of maintaining the daily round of service of the Opus Dei as having no scriptural authority; also, it diverted both minds and resources away from practising, and from enabling others to practice, the genuine roads to salvation:-

".....crist chargiþ prestis more for to preche þe gospel þan to seie masse or matynes, for he ne spekiþ not of matynes ne evensong openly, ne manere of masse now used, but only of þe sacrament; but he comaundiþ to prestis for to preche þe gospel bifore his deþ and aftir."<sup>1</sup>

Rather, the ritual chant and the liturgy were tools of the Devil, deployed deliberately to distract men from humility, repentance, study of God's word, and all the genuine roads to salvation offered by the scriptures:-

"... bi song þe fend lettiþ men to studie & preche þe gospel; for siþ mannys wittis ben of certeyn mesure & myzt, þe more þat þei ben occupied aboute sicke mannus song þe lesse moten þei be sette aboute goddis lawe; for þis stirriþ men to pride & iolitie & lecherie & opere synnys, & so unableþ hem many gatis to understond & kepe holy writt þat techeþ mekenesse, mornynge for oure synnys & opere mennus, & stable lif & charite. & zit god in all þe lawe of grace chargiþ not sicke song but devacion in herte."<sup>2</sup>

Such great value placed on spurious methods of worship produced totally false and pernicious priorities:-

- 
1. 'Speculum de Antichristo', ed. F.D. Matthew, Unprinted Works of John Wyclif, p.112
  2. "Of feynyd contemplatif lif, of song, of þe ordynal of salisbury & of bodely almes & worldly bysynesse of prestis; hou bi þes foure þe fend lettiþ hem fro prechyngæ of þe gospel", ibid., p.191.

...þe ordynalle of salisbury lettif moche prechyng of þe gospel; for folis chargen þat more þan þe maundementis of god & to studie & teche cristis gospel; for 3if a man faile in his ordynale men holden þat grete synne & reproven hym þerof faste, but 3if a preste breke þe hestis of god men chargen þat litel or nouzt; & so 3if prestis seyn here matynes, masse & evensong aftir salisbury usse, þei hemself & oþere men demen it is ynow3, þou3 þei neiþer preche ne teche þe hestis of god & þe gospel,....A lord, 3if alle þe studie & traveile þat men han now aboute salisbury uss wiþ multitude of newe costy portos, antifeners, graielis, & alle oþere bokis weren turned into makynge of biblis & in studyng & techyng þerof, hou moche schulde goddis lawe be forþered & knowen & kept. ....<sup>1</sup>

Not only did overmuch chanting and observance of the ordinal distract its performers from their proper tasks; it rendered the holy text inaudible, and stirred up completely the wrong state of mind - and body - in its hearers:-

" ...First men ordeyned songe of mornyng whanne þei weren in prison... & þat songe & oure accordif not, for oure stirif to iolite & pride, & here stirif to mornyng & to dwelle lenger in wordis of goddis lawe. þan were matynys & masse & evensong, placebo & dirige & comendacion & matynes of oure lady ordeynyd of synful men, to be songen wiþ heize criyng to lette men fro þe sentence & understondyng of þat þat was þus songen, & to maken men wery & undisposid to studie goddis lawe for akyng of hedis."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the liturgy and its plainsong were pernicious enough in the various, and cumulative, consequences of their creation and practice. But singled out for particular condemnation were the especially fatuous aspects of these outward, empty trappings of worship - in particular, the singing of the liturgical texts to polyphonic settings.

---

1. *ibid.*, pp.192-3; also pp.170, 172.

2. *ibid.*, p.191.

This seemed to carry to extremes the scope for abuse of God's ordinances which the creation of the liturgies - by ignorant men prompted by the Devil - had opened up in the first place. For once wicked men had devised these liturgies,

"of schort tyme þanne weren more veyn iapes founden:  
deschaunt, countre note & orgon & smale brekyng,"<sup>1</sup>

which magnified all the worst effects of the liturgies and their chants; they

"stiriþ veyn men to daunsynge more þan to mornynge, & herefore ben many proude & lecherous lorelis founden & dowid wiþ temperal & worldly lordischipis & gret cost. but þes foolis schulden drede þe scharpe wordis of austyn, þat seiþ: as oft as þe song likiþ me more þan doþ þe sentence þat is songen, so oft I confesse þat I synne greuously."<sup>2</sup>

Despite references to the use of music and dancing in worship in Old Testament times, such practices were still indefensible by Christ's law:-

"...zif þes knackeris excusen hem bi songe in þe old lawe - seie þat crist, þat best kepte þe olde lawe as it schulde be aftirward, tauzt not ne chargid us wiþ sich bodely song ne ony of his apostlis, but wiþ devocion in herte & holy lif & trewe prechyng, & þat is ynowþz & þe beste."<sup>3</sup>

In the cultivation of this "vain knacking of new song", priests themselves were the worst offenders; they

"magnifyen more newe songe founden of synful men þan þe gospel of ihū crist, þat is cristene mennus salvacion; for þei bisien hem fastere to kunne & do & teche þis newe song þan to kunne & kepe & teche cristis gospel; & þis is merveile, for þis song distractiþ þe syngere fro devocion & lettiþ men fro consceivyng of þe sentence; & as austyn & gregory techen wel, preiere is betre hard of god bi compunccion & wepyng & stille devocion, as moyses & ihū crist diden, þan bi gret cryng & ioly chauntyng

1. ibid., p.191.

2. ibid.

3. ibid., pp.191-2

þat stireþ men ⁊ wommen to daunsynge ⁊ lettiþ men fro þe sentence of holy writt, as Magnyficat, sanctus ⁊ agnus dei, þat is so broken bi newe knackyng. It semeþ þat god seiþ bi þes newe singeris as he dide in þe gospel to pharisees - þis peple honoureþ me wiþ lippis but here herte is fer fro me, þei worschipen me wiþ-uten cause, techyng lore ⁊ comaundementis of men."<sup>1</sup>

Deceived by the unworthy priests of this generation, therefore, the ordinary people were left too ignorant to see through these idle vanities; rather, they were taken in and positively impressed by them - with inevitable results that only made the situation worse:-

"...oure fleschly peple haþ more lykyng in here bodely eris in sich knackyng ⁊ taterynge þan in heryng of goddis lawe, ⁊ spekyng of þe blisse of hevne, for þei wolen hire proude prestis ⁊ oþere lecherous lorelis þus to knacke notis for many markis ⁊ poundis; but þei wolen not geve here almes to prestis ⁊ children to lerne ⁊ to teche goddis lawe; ⁊ þus bi þis novelrie of song is goddis lawe unstudied ⁊ not kepte."<sup>2</sup>

Such performances ministered only to the vanity of the soloists who gave them; the rest of the choir stood by, silent and dumbfounded, nobody could tell a word that was sung, and the ignorant went and heaped praise on the singers:-

"...where is more disceit in feiþ, hope ⁊ charite? for whanne þer ben fourty or fyfty in a queer, þre or foure proude ⁊ lecherous lorellis schullen knacke þe most devout servyce, þat noman schal here þe sentence, ⁊ alle oþere schullen be doumbe ⁊ loken on hem as foolis. ⁊ þanne strumpatis ⁊ þevys preisen sire iacke or hobbe ⁊ williem þe proude clerk, hou smale þei knacken here notis; ⁊ seyn þat þei servern wel god ⁊ holy chirche, whanne þei despisen god in his face, ⁊ letten oþere cristene men of here devocion ⁊ compunccion, ⁊ stiren hem to worldly vanyte; ⁊ þus trewe servyce of god is lettid ⁊ þis veyn knackyng for oure iolite ⁊ pride is preised aboven þe mone."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. "The order of priesthood", ibid. p.169
  2. "Of feynynd contemplatif lif", ibid., p.192
  3. ibid.

Bishops came in for especial censure. By their corruption and pluralism, they sucked the church dry of wealth of which better use could be made, and expended the money on the promotion of all manner of godlessness, including the maintenance of their household chapels:-

"...prelates disceyven lordis and alle cristene men bi vein preieris of mouþ & veyn knackyng of new song. ... foule ben oure lordis blent to meyntenen open traitours of god, bi gret cost of rentis & lordischipis & zifte of grete benefices, for here stynkyng & abhomynable blastis & lowd cryng; for bi þer grete cryng of song, as deschaunt, countre note & orgene, þei ben lettid fro studyng & prechyng of þe gospel;... [prelates] don not here sacrifices bi mekenesse of herte & mornyng & compunccion for here synnes & þe peplis, but wiþ knackyng of newe song, as orgen or deschant & motetis of holouris, & wiþ worldly pride of costly vestymentis & oþere ornamentis bouzt wiþ pore mennus goodis, & suffren hem perische for meschef & laten pore men have nakid sidis, & dede wallis have grete plente of wast gold."<sup>1</sup>

It was priests, too, that the Lollard polemicists held responsible for persuading rich men to found chantry colleges, providing easy living for godless and useless priests, instead of sinking their money into, e.g. education:-

"... zit þes worldly prestis disceyven riche men in here almes; for þei wolen not stire riche men to fynde pore children able of witt & lyvyng to scole for to lerne, but to fynde proude prestis at hom to crie faste in þe chirche in siztte of þe world. ... also þei maken riche men & tirauntis to holde werre azenst god after here deþ day; for whanne þes riche marchauntis & tirauntis dien & mowen no lengere meyntene synne in þis world bi here owen persone, þan þei fynden many worldly & synful prestis, bi goodis falsely geten þat schulden be restorid to pore men, not to lerne & teche holy writt as crist comaundiþ but dwelle at o place & crie on hey wiþ newe song þat lettiþ devocion & þe sentence to be understonden. .... þenke, ze lordis & myzttty men þat fynden prestis, hou dredeful it is to meynteyne worldly prestis in here lustis, þat neiþer kunnen goode ne wolen lerne ne lyven holiliche in þis noble order."<sup>2</sup>

1. "Of prelates", *ibid.*, pp.76, 77, 91

2. "The order of priesthood", *ibid.*, pp.176, 179.

"Țes fonnyd lordis" imagined that they pleased god by the size of their outlay; but

"...Lord, hou schulden riche men ben excused þat costen so moche in grete schapellis & costly bokis of mannus ordynaunce for fame & nobleie of þe world, & wolen not spende so moche aboute bokis of goddis lawe & for to studie hem & teche hem."<sup>1</sup>

To sum up, therefore, Lollard teaching attacked contemporary devotional practices at three points that are relevant in the present context. They condemned -

- (1) the over-elaboration of the Opus Dei, and the unjustifiably high proportion of the church's resources, in men and materials, that were devoted to its maintenance,
- (2) the founding of chantry colleges, and the maintenance of household chapels, by bishops and laymen,
- (3) the decoration of the performance of the liturgy by indulgence in polyphonic settings of the sacred texts.

#### 4.2. The Establishment reaction

This, of course, was not heresy. It was perfectly possible for anyone to make such criticisms of the church's practices, and yet remain scrupulously orthodox in acceptance of its doctrines. Indeed, such figures as Thomas Brinton in the 14th century, and Thomas Gascoigne in the 15th, went much further than this in condemning the church of their day, without ever arousing the <sup>e</sup> least suspicion of any doctrinal heterodoxy.

In the case of the Lollards, however, these views were but a single element within a body of practices, attitudes and beliefs that comprehended other opinions, concerning e.g. the Papacy and transubstantiation, which were unequivocally heretical. Wyclif's first examination for heterodoxy took place in February 1377; by May 1377 the pope had condemned as erroneous 18 out of 50 propositions drawn from his writings. In May 1382, a council of bishops at Blackfriars declared 10 of his theses not merely erroneous, but heretical. The response of those in authority was immediate and unanimous:- the heretic must recant, and his heresy must be confounded.

---

1. "Of feynyd contemplatif lif", ibid., p.193.

This was easier said than done; neither the civil nor the episcopal governmental machines had any experience in repressing heresy. Wyclif himself had already retired from Oxford to Lutterworth and now the University broke up his circle of disciples, and effectively killed academic Lollardy; but such of his followers as remained true to his beliefs continued the work amongst the ordinary people - "they invited the common man to spurn his official pastors, and to teach himself heresy."<sup>1</sup> Lollardy thus became, and was permanently to remain, an active force in the market towns and countryside of many parts of England. Because certain of its tenets could be applied to political purposes - its anti-clericalism, for instance, could be used to justify the laity in confiscating the property of the "clerks possessioners" - Lollardy was seen to threaten the stability of the government as well as the authority of the church's hierarchy. It took some 15-20 years for the church and the lay power to evolve machinery effective to search out Lollardy, and bring its adherents either to recantation and reconciliation, or to the stake. In the meantime, the governing classes were acutely aware of the threat to the stability of government and church posed by the Lollards; probably the threat was over-estimated in many quarters, but many worst fears must have appeared only too justified during the Lollard risings of 1413-14. Treatises confounding the heresy were still being written in the mid-15th century; trials of Lollard heretics continued into the 16th. Lollardy was a problem of which the church had to remain acutely aware throughout the rest of the Middle Ages - indeed, until it became overshadowed by, or rather, merged into, fresh heresy in the 1520's.<sup>2</sup>

Thus from c.1378 onwards there was obtruded into English religious life first a heresiarch, and then a heresy, which for some 50 years and more was sufficiently strong to cause the Establishment of the day no small concern. The reaction of those in authority was unanimous. Lollardy made no converts in the governing classes, very few in the knightly and merchant classes, very few amongst the clergy. The objects of Lollard condemnation survived unscathed and unaltered; indeed, as a movement to reform the church, Lollardy was a calamitous failure.<sup>3</sup>

1. K.B. Macfarlane, Wycliffe and English Non-conformity, p.2.

2. See A.G. Dickens, The English Reformation, pp.22-37

3. Locally, perhaps, individuals could put into practice so much of Lollard teaching as they were able to act upon. For instance, the unknown owner of one Lollard New Testament took to heart the denunciations of polyphonic music sufficiently strongly to tear up a manuscript of such music, and use it in contempt as the fly-leaves of the binding of his volume:- SRO MS DD/WHb 3182. The two bi-folia contain (1) barely legible, a setting of Sanctus, three parts in score, and a setting of some non-liturgical devotional poem, 2 parts in score; and (2) a setting of Magnificat, legible and almost complete, 3 parts in score, dating from c.1360. No Lollard could have looked at its jaunty rhythms and distorted words, and concluded that it deserved any better a fate.



Not only did the Lollards themselves fail; they poisoned the whole ground for the next 150 years. Their excesses rendered disreputable the very idea of reform of any complexion, and rendered inevitable the remarkable longevity of the triumphal reaction which they produced.

This is not to say that the Lollard heresy had no effect on the manner of divine worship in England. Rather, its effect was prodigious - but in a manner totally opposite to that which the Lollards intended. The 50 years following Wyclif's first condemnation were the period when the establishment felt most apprehensive about the incidence and possible effects of Lollardy. The result was a substantial backlash against every idea which the Lollards promoted. Those in authority took pains to emphasise their own orthodoxy by - amongst other things - conspicuous cultivation of all those outward aspects of religious life which the Lollards most virulently attacked. In the present context, it is especially relevant that the 45 years from 1380 to 1425 witnessed a sudden intensification of the cultivation of the music and musicians of the liturgy and the associated devotional services of the church. For this phenomenon, the most convincing explanation is that which interprets it as one aspect of the Establishment's reaction to the Lollard attempts to discredit and dismember the whole concept of the beauty of holiness in divine worship. This reaction found many varied methods of expression:-

- (1) a marked increase in the number of new collegiate churches founded by members of the lay and ecclesiastical aristocracy;
- (2) a much increased degree of concern on the part of the founders to provide full choral forces adequate to render, with all due elaboration, the totality of the Opus Dei;
- (3) a sudden, though short-lived, emphasis on the provision of those members of liturgical choirs most concerned with the pure ceremony of worship:- the choristers;
- (4) the admission of lay expertise into choirs of all complexions, apparently to enhance the quality and expand the scope of their music;
- (5) a return, at the old-established colleges and cathedrals, to strict observance of the rules concerning the due celebration of divine worship;
- (6) the creation of secular Lady Chapel choirs at the greater Benedictine and Augustinian monasteries; and
- (7) the adoption and practice of polyphonic music as a regular feature of worship as most fitly conducted, with a concomitant rise in the esteem paid to those who composed and performed it.

#### 4.2.1. New Collegiate Foundations 1382-1426

In the 44 years between 1382 and 1426 some 25 new collegiate churches were founded.<sup>1</sup> This average of one new foundation every two years is a telling indication of the fervour with which contemporaries viewed the necessity for cultivating the worship of the Almighty down here, so as to confound Lollardy and enrich the church, and to promote the welfare of their souls after death.

These colleges exhibited considerable variety in the composition of their staffs, reflecting the order of priorities of their respective founders. In a few, the governing body was to be composed of a dean and canons (e.g. Hemingborough and Stoke-by-Clare) while the choral services were committed to teams of vicars-choral. The founders of these colleges apparently wished to follow older traditions in the constitution of collegiate churches, creating canonries and prebends for administrators in their service, while deputing the worship of God to resident vicars-choral.





The great majority of colleges, however, adhered to more recent concepts, and were founded as multiple chantries, governed not by canons, but by a provost or master, and the team of resident priests of the college themselves. Hereby, the resources which the founder had available for the endowment of priests could be ploughed almost totally into the provision of mass-priests for the sake of his soul. Some colleges, indeed, were little more than multiple chantries, wherein provision was made just for priests, and perhaps a clerk or two to serve at mass; such were Mettingham, Suffolk (a master and 12 chaplains)<sup>2</sup>, Battlefield, Shropshire (a master and 5 chaplains) and Northhill, Bedfordshire (a dean, 4 chaplains and 2 choristers)<sup>3</sup>.


At other colleges, the founder was prepared to forgo a mass-priest or two in order to provide a token number of both clerks and choristers to enable the canonical Hours to be celebrated with at least some approximation to the staff required by the liturgy. Examples of this class would be Pleshey, Essex (a warden, 8 chaplains, 2 clerks and 2 choristers)<sup>4</sup>, and Staindrop, Durham (apparently a warden, 8 chaplains 2 clerks and 2 choristers)<sup>5</sup>.

1. Information in the following passage drawn from D.Knowles and R.N.Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses, pp.413-446
2. J.C. Cox, in VCH Suffolk, vol.2, pp.144-5
3. ed. C.G. Chambers, "Some Records of Northhill College, No.II", 2 Bedfordshire Historical Society, p.119.
4. Statute 1; PRO DL 41 10/44 fo.lv.
5. D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses, pp.439-40

However, the most telling aspect of the nature of this period, as exhibited by the foundation of colleges, was the high proportion - about one-third - which were conceived on an altogether more comprehensive scale, planned so as to provide choirs of proportions adequate to give faithful accounts of the performance of the whole liturgy. These are the institutions which are of most interest in the present context. Their founders supplied the necessary priests, and - as far as surviving codes of statutes indicate - left very detailed and precise instructions to ensure the regular and profuse recitation of masses for their souls. However, they were no less concerned to have the totality of the daily Office faithfully performed according to cathedral liturgies - almost invariably, Salisbury Use - and provided the staff that was necessary. The principal details are tabulated below:-





Table 3: Choral staffs of major collegiate churches founded 1379-1422.


Date of foundation	Founder(s)
1379	William Wykham,  Winchester
1382	William Wykham,  Winchester
refoundation 1392	Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick
1395	William Courtenay,  Canterbury
1398-1411	King Henry 4, and Edward and Edmund Plantagenet, dukes of York.
1421	Thomas, Lord de la Warre
1415	Edmund Mortimer, earl of March
1422	Henry Chichele,  Canterbury

 = bishop or archbishop. c. = about, a. = before

totality of the daily Office faithfully performed according to cathedral liturgies - almost invariably, Salisbury Use - and provided the staff that was necessary. The principal details are tabulated below:-

Table 3: Choral staffs of major collegiate churches founded 1379-1422.

Date of foundation	Founder(s)	College	Date of choir	choral establishment			others
				priests	clerks	choristers	
1379	William Wykham,  Winchester	NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD	1392	10 ch	3	16	1 warden, 70 scholars
1382	William Wykham,  Winchester	WINCHESTER COLLEGE	1392	10 fellows 3 ch	3	16	1 warden, 70 scholars
refoundation 1392	Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick	WARWICK	c. 1392	6 v-c	4	6	1 dean, 6 canons
1395	William Courtenay,  Canterbury	MAIDSTONE	p. 1395	12 ch	?4	?8	1 master
1398-1411	King Henry 4, and Edward and Edmund Plantagenet, dukes of York.	FOTHERINGHAY	a. 1415	12 ch	8	13	1 master
1421	Thomas, Lord de la Warre	MANCHESTER	p. 1421	8 ch	4	6	1 warden
1415	Edmund Mortimer, earl of March	STOKE-BY-CLARE	a. 1423	8 v-c	4	5	1 dean, 6 canons
1422	Henry Chichele,  Canterbury	HIGHAM FERRERS	p. 1422	7 ch	4	6	1 master

 = bishop or archbishop. c. = about, a. = before, p. = after. ch = chaplains, v-c = vicars-choral.

4.2.1. (a) New College, Oxford and Winchester College

The two earliest of these Colleges, New College, Oxford and Winchester College, show with great clarity the impact which the career and opinions of John Wyclif and his followers had on one prominent member of the Establishment, and his reaction to them. Even before Wyclif's condemnation as a heretic, William Wykham, bishop of Winchester and sometime Lord Chancellor of England, had been maintaining a grammar master and a few pupils somewhere in Winchester (by 1373), and some 70 scholars in the University town of Oxford (by 1376)<sup>1</sup>. These ventures received securer establishment with the foundation and endowment of Winchester College in 1382, and New College, Oxford in 1379. The foundation deeds specified that each was to consist of a warden and 70 scholars<sup>2</sup>; it was not Wykham's original intention that either college should have a distinct chapel staff.

Throughout the 1380's both colleges were in the process of being built; so too was Wycliffism and Lollardy. By the early 1390's there had been enough eruptions of the heresy in town and countryside to convince those in authority that it could spring up anywhere and in any social class<sup>3</sup>. There can, it seems, be little doubt that Wykham wanted his colleges to be not merely scrupulously free of heresy in themselves; as the Lollard threat grew, it becomes increasingly clear that he wished his colleges to be prodigious producers of learned priests and clerks, brought up and trained in orthodox religion, able to recognise and combat heresy whenever they confronted it. The preamble to the statutes of New College, compiled in 1400, demonstrates that Wykham's motive in founding both colleges was the provision of an educated and learned secular clergy<sup>4</sup>; and also, more explicitly, "the praise, glory and honour of the Name of the Crucified and the most glorious Mary his mother, the maintenance and exaltation of the Christian faith of holy church, the advancement of divine worship...."<sup>5</sup>

1. A.F. Leach, A History of Winchester College, pp.62-3

2. ibid., pp.64-6; T.F. Kirby, Annals of Winchester College, pp.3-4,435-9.

3. K.B. Macfarlane, Wycliffe and English Non-conformity, chapter 5, esp. pp.129-30.

4. A.F. Leach, ... Winchester College, pp.69-70. Wykham's natural antipathy to Lollardy, as a bishop, may very well have been sharpened, of course, by the part that Wyclif personally had played in Wykham's humiliation in 1376.

5. T.F. Kirby, Annals...., p.456

This latter was of particular importance. By about 1391, the obvious desirability of imbuing the scholars of both colleges with examples of the orthodox celebration of mass and the Hours as splendidly as resources would allow, must have been making the establishment of large-scale chapel staffs a matter of some urgency. The ceremonial of the liturgy should be rendered with all the elaboration and complexity that the Lollards most attacked. At Oxford, New college was already a going concern, the scholars having taken possession of the buildings in 1386<sup>1</sup>; at Winchester, the college was still being built. In neither case was it too late to add to the principal members, the warden and 70 scholars, a self-contained chapel staff. On 3 February 1392 papal confirmation was granted to Wykham of an ordinance whereby he proposed to add to each of his two colleges "10 perpetual secular priests to celebrate mass and the other divine offices in the chapel, with 3 clerks and 16 boys to assist them". Together with this papal confirmation, an indult was granted empowering Wykham to go ahead and appoint "the priests, clerks and boys aforesaid."<sup>2</sup>

For New College, the dimensions of the chapel choir remained established exactly as Wykham planned in 1392:- 10 chaplains, 3 clerks and 16 choristers.<sup>3</sup> However, at Winchester it was found necessary to apply some modification. The administration of the college was simply too much for one man, the warden, to cope with alone; but the expedient of selecting administrative officials from the senior scholars (as was the practice at University colleges) was quite inapplicable at Winchester, where the oldest scholars were mere youths of 17 or 18. A team of administrators would have to be provided. The College occupied its buildings on 28 March 1394; and consultations between Wykham and Warden Morys that summer appear to have resulted in a decision to modify the constitution of the college<sup>4</sup>, altering the proposed 10 priests of the chapel, as sanctioned by the Pope, to 10 fellows of the College.<sup>5</sup> By 1400, when the code of statutes was drawn up in its final form, the details of the new scheme were fully worked out.

It was ordained that the College should include, beside the Warden, 13 priests. Ten of these were to be permanent members of the College,

1. A.H.M. Jones, "Oxford:- New College", in VCH Oxfordshire, vol.3,p.144
2. C.Pap.Reg., 4 Papal Letters (1362-1404) pp.422,437
3. Statutes of 1400:- A.H.M. Jones "Oxford: New College" in VCH Oxfordshire vol.3, p.157.
4. A.F. Leach, ...Winchester College, p.133,135
5. Between 1394 and 1399 the 10 chaplains already admitted were gradually sworn and instituted as Fellows:- T.F Kirby, Annals..... pp.141-4, A.F. Leach, ...Winchester College, pp.134-9.

having freeholds in their offices, to be known as, and to serve as, Fellows of the College.<sup>1</sup> From them were to be selected its essential administrative officials<sup>2</sup>, and in all respects, the Warden and fellows constituted its governing body. However, the Fellows also doubled as the priest members of the Chapel staff; their qualification for admission was adequate ability and skill in grammar, reading and singing, and their duties included ministering in the chapel and serving at divine service there.<sup>3</sup> All the fellows were supposed to be present every day at every service, and were subject to fines for unlicensed absence; however, the warden was empowered to grant permission for such absence for any reasonable cause, and in view of the administrative burdens borne by at least half the fellows, this must have been commonly given - on non-festival days at least.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the two unrelated aspects of the fellows' work mixed ill together, and it is probable that this expedient failed to work at all well. Certainly, this was just about the only major feature of the constitution of Winchester College which Henry 6 chose not to adopt for Eton College 50 years later.

With the fellows there were to be three further chaplains, for whom the admission qualifications were the same, but who - not being fellows - had no place in the administration of the College, and who therefore served simply as full-time priests of the chapel.<sup>5</sup> Total sacerdotal staff, therefore, was the standard 13: to make up the remaining categories of what was to be a self-contained chapel staff, there were also to be the 3 clerks and 16 choristers<sup>6</sup> which Wykham had resolved upon c.1391.

#### 4.2.1.(b) St. Mary, Warwick.

Strictly speaking, the college of St. Mary, Warwick was not a new foundation of the period 1380-1425, since it had in fact existed since 1123. However, it enjoyed so extensive a re-endowment in the 1390's that it qualifies to be considered as a new creation of the period. Even after the small-scale re-endowments of 1341 and 1364-7, its income probably did not exceed £60 p.a., and it is doubtful how much of a working choral staff it was able to maintain.<sup>7</sup> Between 1392 and 1395, however, the college's patron,

1. Statutes 1, 8:- T.F. Kirby, Annals... pp.456,476

2. Statutes 10,11,14, also 31,13, 36,33; ibid., pp.482-4, 488; 507,487, 511-2, 508-9.

3. Statute 8; ibid., pp.476-7. 4. Statute 27, ibid., p.503

5. Statutes 1, 8; ibid., pp.456,476-7,480-1.

6. ibid., pp.456,481

7. See above, pp. 2044-6, pp. 3005-6.

Thomas Beauchamp 2, Earl of Warwick, and his younger brother, William Beauchamp, Lord Bergavenny, added churches and manors to the college which by 1410/11 were bringing in some £172.16. 7d. p.a.<sup>1</sup> In 1392, that is, there began a new phase in the college's history; it was restored to a position of respectable wealth, and made fully operational and able to maintain its full complement of choral staff.

In 1399 it was stated that the college's revenues were then just sufficient to maintain all its resident staff:- the dean, vicars, clerks and choristers and the verger.<sup>2</sup> The document concerned was the King's letters patent granting the College licence in mortmain to acquire yet further endowments; in seeking such permission institutions always gave the worst possible account of their finances (to justify their request for licence to acquire more), so the admission that the resident staff were then being fully maintained will certainly be true. It was stated that the new endowments were required to pay the canons' prebends, the one item that the college's revenue still could not stretch to; and indeed, a valor of the college's property, dateable to c.1399, purports to show that there was only £7.13. 6d. p.a. to share between them.<sup>3</sup> In pursuance of the licence, the appropriation to the college of Warwick's seven parish churches was completed, worth about £30 p.a. in tithes, and in 1401 Hethcote manor was acquired, worth another £6.<sup>4</sup>

In 1410/11 the college's income amounted to £289.2. 11d., and the Treasurer's Account for that year records the constitution of almost the complete college staff:- the Dean and 5 canons; six vicars choral, six choristers, and the Master of the Song School; the parish chaplain; and the verger.<sup>5</sup> It is clear, however, that there is something missing. Firstly, the license in mortmain granted to the college in 1399 mentioned clerks of the choir among the resident staff of the college<sup>6</sup>; these, however, do not appear on the Treasurer's Account. Secondly, the 1441 Statutes required that all the vicars of the college be in priest's orders at the time of their admission,<sup>7</sup> and this seems unlikely to have been a new requirement. Its consequence for the conduct of Divine Service is obvious; it necessitated the provision of clerks in deacon's and subdeacon's orders.

- 
1. D. Styles, Ministers' Accounts, pp.xiii-xiiii; Treasurer's A/C 1410/11: WrkRO CR 895/9.
  2. PRO E 164 22 fo.215r.
  3. PRO SC 11 692.
  4. D. Styles, Ministers' Accounts, pp.xvi-xvii, 3 fn.3
  5. WrkRO CR 895/9 mm 2,3.
  6. PRO E 164 22 fo.215r.
  7. Statute 13:- PRO E 315 492 fo.8r. In the text the statutes are undated; for attribution to the year 1441 see D.Styles, Ministers' Accounts, p.xxvi.



It transpires that there were in fact three of these clerks, though their existence is extremely difficult to trace. Their salaries were not paid by the college, and they never appear on the accounts. The evidence for their existence lies in the accounts of payments made for attendance at obits, which appear on all the treasurer's and sub-treasurer's accounts from 1448/9 onwards. When all those who qualify in this context as "clerks" have been added up, it transpires that the number of clerks actually paid for attendance at obits consistently exceeds this number by three.<sup>1</sup> This can only mean that the college staff normally included three clerks beyond those in receipt of salaries from the College treasurer.

The circumstances behind the maintenance of at least one of these clerks can be traced in full. Amongst the early endowments of the college was the rectory of Greetham in Rutland. This had been alienated, probably in the 13th century, to St. Sepulchre's Priory, Warwick, and was lost beyond recovery; but as a condition of the original grant, St. Sepulchre's paid the salary of one clerk in subdeacon's orders, serving in the collegiate church.<sup>2</sup> One of the sub-deacon's duties would have been to read the epistle at mass; and it is as "epistoler" that he was described in the return relating to St. Sepulchre's in the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535. The priory's income from Greetham was then only £4. 6. 8d. p.a.; out of this they paid the epistoler at St. Mary's £3. 6. 8d. as his annual salary.<sup>3</sup> Similar circumstances probably lay behind the maintenance of the remaining two clerks; by analogy one probably was a gospeller in deacon's orders.

The institution of all of them may perhaps go back to the time of the alienation of the college's original endowments, probably in the 13th century; it was their existence that made it possible to require that all the vicars be priests.

In addition to these three clerks, the college employed a fourth, the Master of the Song School. His position was highly anomalous, and it is only with difficulty that its exact nature can be reconstructed; the whole question is more fully dealt with in an appendix.<sup>4</sup> Suffice it to say here that it seems that as the college's income declined in the 13th century, the college decided to dispense with its choristers; this involved relieving the Instructor of the Choristers, presumably

1. e.g. in 1448/9, the obit accounts list the dean, canons, vicars, choristers and parish chaplain in full, and that left only the Master of the Song School and the verger. These were two of the "clerks"; but throughout the year there were five clerks recorded as present at the Obit services. D. Styles, Ministers' Accounts, pp. 37-8

2. PRO E 164 22 fo. 56v.

3. VE vol. 3, p. 86

4. See below, Appendix A5, pp. A020-5.

one of the vicars-choral, of his duties also. However, by 1295 it was already the practice to observe Lady Mass daily in the collegiate church<sup>1</sup>, and apparently it was desired that boys' voices should continue to be available to sing at least the Ordinary of the <sup>Lady</sup> Mass. A scheme was therefore devised to enable this to be done at no cost to the College itself. Since the early 12th century the grammar school of the town of Warwick had been in the patronage and under the supervision of the Chapter of St. Mary's;<sup>2</sup> it was unendowed, and the master lived by taking fees from his pupils. The College now created, on the same terms, a second school, with its own master - the Magister Musice. He became an elementary teacher for the town, teaching the first elements of reading Latin, and also musicam et cantum.<sup>3</sup> His music teaching involved more than just the few common chants which were part of the elementary training of any child; he was to attend each day at Lady Mass in the Lady Chapel of the collegiate church, with two of his scholars, and there, to the praise of the Virgin Mary, sing all the music up to and including the Agnus Dei.<sup>4</sup> It seems quite certain that a college which made arrangements such as these for the singing of Lady Mass can have had no regular choristers or Instructor of the Choristers of its own.

Presumably these arrangements remained in force until the refoundation of the college in 1392-5 enabled it to reinstate its own six choristers; certainly they had been fully reinstated by 1399.<sup>5</sup> The arrangements which the college then made for their instruction bore very strongly the marks of the unusual events of the previous century. In 1409 the dean and chapter conferred the "Scolas cantancium et musicarum Warr'" on William Wittney, clericus et organista.<sup>6</sup> The post conferred on Wittney was that of the town Magister Musice as now modified to suit the college's new circumstances. Wittney's position had ceased to be that of mainly an elementary teacher provided for the benefit of the town, living on fees paid by the pupils. Now that the college had its own choristers again, the job of the magister scholarum cantancium et musicarum was primarily to instruct them. Wittney undertook to instruct the choristers of the college for as long as he served as song school master<sup>7</sup> and for this the college paid him £3. p.a.

1. PRO E 164 22 fo.49v.

2. ibid., ff.8v.,11r.

3. magister vero musice primas literas addiscentes phalterium musicam et cantum teneat et informet:- ibid., fo.2v. The grammar master took over his pupils when they were ready to begin the learning of Latin grammar and syntax. The creation of the new school had created difficulties about the effective borderline between the duties of the two masters; this award, dateable to c.1325, clarified the dispute that had arisen.

4. ibid., fo.3r.

5. ibid., fo.215r.

6. ibid., fo.208r.

7. Concessimus eciam eidem Willelmo Scolas cantancium et musicarum Warr' in Warr' habendas et tenendas prout moris est quamdiu idem Willelmus debite et congrue poterit easdem occupare sub hac forma; eciam quod instruat et informet Choristas ecclesie predicte deputatos et deputandos singulis annis quamdiu idem Willelmus dictas Scolas occupaverit. ibid., fo.208v.

Witney's job may have continued to involve some elementary teaching to non-choristers in the town. The salary allowed him by the college as Instructor of the Choristers fell short of being generous - 60s. p.a. for Witney, 66s. 8d. for his successor in 1432/3 and 1448/9,<sup>1</sup> - and required supplementation. He would have had the time for such teaching, since he - or his successor, anyway - was obliged to attend service only at matins, high mass, vespers and compline on double feasts<sup>2</sup>, and, presumably, daily Lady Mass. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the position was predominantly connected with the music of the collegiate church. William Witteney himself was described as 'clerk and singer of polyphonic music'<sup>3</sup>, so his appointment was as a man qualified to contribute to the services in the collegiate church; and he subsequently gave a book of polyphony to the college.<sup>4</sup> The next Instructor of the Choristers whose name is known, holding office in 1432/3 and 1448/9 was John Soursby<sup>5</sup>, a composer of liturgical music of sufficient celebrity for perhaps four of his works to be copied - along with many other compositions of English origin - into the great codices compiled in North Italy during the 15th century, and preserved at Trent, Bologna and Aosta.<sup>6</sup> By 1454/5 the salary had risen to a respectable living wage of £5. 6. 8d. p.a. and the clause relating that this was for service just on feast days had disappeared.<sup>7</sup> By then presumably the last traces of the town elementary teacher had been stripped from the job, and it had been transformed into one of full-time Instructor of the Choristers and lay-clerk on the foundation of the College, existing for the sole benefit of the college.

By 1410, therefore, the choral staff of the college stood established at 6 vicars choral, 4 clerks (of whom one was Instructor of the Choristers) and 6 choristers; probably this staff had already been in full working order by 1399, having been established during the re-foundation of the College in 1392-95.

- 
1. WrkRO CR 895/9 m.3; D. Styles Ministers' Accounts, pp.6, 22.
  2. Styles, Ministers' Accounts, pp.6, 22.
  3. clericus et organista :- PRO E 164 22 fo.208r.
  4. Inventory of 1465, PRO E 154 1/46:- item j Organ book bounde with bordes of Witneys yeft of parchemyn havynge a quayer of paper prikked in the begynnyng.
  5. D.Styles, Ministers' Accounts, pp.6, 22
  6. Aosta, Seminario, MS no ref.:- Sanctus ff 250v-2r., Sanctus ff.251v-3r., Agnus Dei ff.253v.-4r; Trento, Castello del Buon Consiglio, MS 92:- Sanctus ff.127v.-8r., duplicated at ff.200v-2r., ascribed to 'Sorbi'.  
I am grateful to Prof. Brian Trowell for sending me these references.
  7. D.Styles, Ministers' Accounts, p.47

4.2.1. (c) The Colleges of Maidstone, Fotheringhay, Manchester, Stoke-by-Clare and Higham Ferrers.

The exact dimensions of the choral staffs of the remaining large-scale collegiate foundations of this period may much more readily be determined. Maidstone College was founded in 1395 by William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, and completed by his successor Thomas Arundel; the original constitution was for a master, 12 chaplains and 12 clerks.<sup>1</sup> The "clerks" were, in fact, divided into clerks and choristers; both are mentioned in the wills of two early Masters of the College, John Wotton (dated 1417) and Roger Herun (died 1441), and Wotton bequeathed vestments to the college to be used each year by the boy-bishop.<sup>2</sup> The numbers of each category are not known; four clerks and eight choristers seems the most likely division.

On Fotheringhay a chantry college of a master, 12 chaplains and 4 clerks was founded by Edmund of Langley, earl of Cambridge and Duke of York, fourth son of Edward 3 in, or a little before, 1398. In 1411, his son Edward Plantaganet, duke of York, and the latter's cousin, King Henry 4, had the college moved from the chapel of Fotheringhay Castle to the parish church, and it was refounded there in 1415. The extant code of statutes appears to have come into effect the same year;<sup>3</sup> the preamble incorporated the words already used in Wykham's New College statutes, mentioning "the advancement of divine worship" amongst the founder's intentions for the College.<sup>4</sup> Very adequate provision was made for the cultivation of divine worship:- a master and 12 chaplains, 8 clerks and 13 choristers.<sup>5</sup>

The college of St. Mary, Manchester, was founded in 1421<sup>6</sup> by Thomas, Lord de la Warre, lord of the manor of Manchester, and Thomas Langley, bishop of Durham.<sup>7</sup> The college was governed by a warden, and the working chapel staff consisted of 8 chaplains, 4 clerks and 6 choristers.<sup>8</sup> In 1422 Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury (1414-43) founded a college dedicated to St. Mary at his birth-place, Higham Ferrers in Northamptonshire; it was staffed by a master, 7 chaplains, 4 clerks and 6 choristers.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the college of St. John Baptist,

1. R.C. Fowler, in VCH Kent, vol.2, p.232

2. ed. E.F.Jacob, Register of Henry Chichele, vol.2, p.132; OBL MS CCC 256, fo.143r.

3. ed. A.H. Thompson, Statutes of the College of....Fotheringhay, pp.241-7

4. ibid., p.270; cf. p.4012above. 5. Statute 1; ibid., p.270

6. J. Tait in VCH Lancashire, vol.2 p.167

7. Langley's part in the foundation of the College seems to be recorded only in the preamble to the statutes, now preserved in a contemporary, but fragmentary roll of extracts:- PRO DL 41 2/32 m.1.

8. ibid.

9. Monasticon, vol.6 p.1424

Stoke-by-Clare (Suffolk) was founded between 1415 and 1419 by Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March and Lord of Clare. By its statutes dated 28th January 1423, its governing body was to consist of a dean and 6 canons, and its choral staff of 8 vicars-choral, 4 clerks and 5 choristers.<sup>1</sup>

Figures such as these display clearly the way in which founders of this period appreciated the desirability of supplying choral forces as fully staffed as possible to permit the rendering of the liturgy with as much splendour as could be contrived. At the well-endowed colleges of the pre-Lollard period, e.g. St. George's Chapel, Windsor, it was considered quite suitable and adequate for an annual revenue exceeding £600 to support a choral staff totalling 23 persons. At the more modest foundations of the Lollard period, by contrast, choirs of 16-18 voices were supported out of endowments producing less than £300 p.a. - at St. Mary Warwick, for instance; and the larger colleges maintained choirs of 29-33 voices. In terms of sheer size, therefore, there had clearly been a considerable modification in the concept of the simple overall number of voices which composed a liturgical choir as best constituted to perform its duties; and to meet these increasing optimum numbers, ways were found of allocating a much greater proportion of a college's cash resources to the maintenance of its choral staff.

---

1. PRO E 135 3/50 ff 2v, 9r., 11r.-11v.

This copy of the statutes bears the date 28 January 142 $\frac{2}{3}$ ; however, it is in an early 16th century hand, and close inspection shows that it is a copy not of the original statutes, but of a later revision. This revision retains intact the substance of the original statutes, as printed in Monasticon, vol.6, part 3, pp.1417-23, from a manuscript since destroyed in the Cotton fire.

#### 4.2.2. The expansion of household chapels.

Appreciation of the desirability of maintaining well-staffed choral forces at this period was not limited to the founders of collegiate churches. At a time of schism and disorder in the church at large, and of heresy both at home and elsewhere in Europe (notably Bohemia), it was plain that the leaders of society, the princes of the land and the princes of the church, had a particular interest in, and a clear duty to demonstrate, their own adherence to social stability and to orthodox religion. One effective and straightforward way of achieving this was the conspicuous cultivation of the outward trappings of worship; this was at once an unmistakable way of denying any sympathy with Lollardy, and a demonstration of faith in the saving powers of holy church unshaken by any arguments about which Pope was the real one. Consequently, the period witnessed the considerable expansion of the Chapel Royal, and the creation of at least one most notable household chapel by a member of the highest aristocracy - Thomas, duke of Clarence - which may well have been merely typical of very many more.

#### 4.2.2. (a) The Chapel Royal.

It has been established that during the period c.1360-1384 the personnel of the Chapel Royal became stabilised at a Dean, 13 gentleman-priests (of whom 2-5 were of a senior dignior clericus capelle status), 2 gentleman-clerks, 2 yeoman-clerks, and 4-5 choristers.<sup>1</sup> Over the succeeding 40 years this body of personnel expanded almost out of recognition, until by 1421 the total staff of the Chapel Royal exceeded 50. At first it is not at all easy to trace the exact chronology of this expansion, because during the reign of Richard 2 the history of the Chapel was considerably complicated both by the personality of the king himself, and by the side-effects of certain of the political events of his reign. These involved increases in the apparent number of members of his chapel, but in such a manner that it cannot be assumed that all these new personnel were genuinely effective members of the chapel staff. These temporary confusions were resolved by Henry 4, and from then on the history of the Chapel royal is far more easily discernible.

---

1. See above, pp. 3026-9.

The first apparent increase in the chapel's staff occurred between 1384 and 1386; on close examination, however, this turns out to be illusory. It is partly a result of the type of evidence surviving for that period, and partly an unexpected side-effect of the mounting political tension of the 1380's. For the years between 1384 and the resolution of the political crisis of 1387-88, no accounts of the Treasurer of the Household have survived. The only available lists of chapel staff are those occurring on the rolls of liveries from the Great Wardrobe. By 1384, Richard had instituted a custom whereby each day the Chapel Royal sang a votive antiphon to St. John Baptist, Inter natos, at the conclusion of vespers and compline. For the years 1384, 1385 and 1386 there survive accounts of the Great Wardrobe recording the delivery of cloth each October 1st to the clerks and chaplains of the chapel as their reward for singing Inter natos.<sup>1</sup>

Now prior to the 1380's, the distinction between chapel staff and clerks of other departments of the household had always been maintained. Men who were not of the chapel (including the few who had begun their careers as chapel clerks but had later moved to other departments) did not appear among the two self-contained groups of chapel members which can be traced on the household accounts - i.e., the digniores clerici (those allowed 46s.8d. p.a. for livery) and the ordinary clerks (allowed 40s.0d.). However, these lines become blurred on the Inter natos lists of 1384-86, since among the genuine chapel staff can be traced others whose real role at court lay more in the wider sphere of the King's administration than narrowly in merely the conduct of his daily devotions. Two of those listed as chaplains of the Chapel Royal in 1384, for instance, were Richard Metford and Nicholas Slake; but elsewhere on the same account their names may be spotted amongst those of magnates of such consequence as Thomas Mowbray, earl of Nottingham, and Ralph, Lord Stafford.<sup>2</sup> The following year Metford and Slake appear again, and also Richard Clifford and John Prophet.<sup>3</sup> All four of these were politicians or top household administrators, rather than chapel staff; the next year they were joined by a fifth man in this category, Guy Roclif.<sup>4</sup>

1. PRO E 101 401/6 m. 24, 401/16 mm.23, 26.

2. PRO E 101 401/6 mm. 24, 19.

3. PRO E 101 401/16 m.23

4. ibid., m.26

The old distinction between clerks of the chapel and clerks of other departments of the household seems to have been crumbling; the genuine chapel clerks were finding their numbers swollen by the inclusion of members of the King's household whose duties were more strictly political and administrative. A reason for this can be suggested. By 1385 Richard's government, as conducted under the auspices of John of Gaunt and Michael de la Pole, but coming increasingly under the influence of such of the King's cronies as Sir Simon Burley and John Salisbury, was rousing hostility and opposition; and in view of the unwholesome influence exercised over the King by such members of his household, the Commons in 1385 asked Richard to examine its personnel annually and remove unworthy members. From Richard they got a dusty answer; however, the general atmosphere may have left him feeling the less free to fill certain positions in his household with exactly whom he wanted. Instead, therefore, it seems that he added certain politically vulnerable servants to the one department of the household of which the composition was least susceptible to pressures exerted from outside - namely his private chapel.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, there remained in the chapel certain of its members whose rising importance in government had in fact taken their role totally outside mere chapel duties, but whom, because of opposition, it seemed wiser not to promote outside the sanctuary of the household chapel. An example of the latter was the Richard Metford already referred to. He first appears as some sort of minor household clerk in 1359/60, and had become a clerk of the Chapel Royal by 1363/4.<sup>2</sup> There he remained inconspicuously enough throughout the rest of the reign of Edward 3. However, on the majority of Richard 2 (1381) he became one of the inner circle of the King's advisers, and by 1382 had entered the administration as chirographer of common bench. By June 1385 he was no longer an active chapel clerk, but the King's Secretary, in constant and intimate attendance on the King's business.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. There are further observations on the political role of the Chapel Royal at this period in T.F.Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, vol.5 p.216, where he writes of "the little group of chaplains of Richard's private chapel, who became the chief instruments of the monarch's striving towards autocracy."
  2. PRO E 101 393/11 fo.77r., 394/16 m.9.
  3. For a recent summary of Metford's career see A.C.Cobban, The King's Hall, pp.291-2 and references there quoted.



Throughout all this period, however, and until October 1386, it is nevertheless as a chapel clerk that his name appears on the Great Wardrobe accounts.<sup>1</sup> He was a much hated man, and during the crisis of 1388 he paid for his close association with the King by being deprived of office and removed from court by order of the Lords Appellant. Perhaps it was also only these events which ultimately removed his name from the lists of chapel clerks, though he must have ceased to be active in the chapel years before.

These then were the pressures which were causing the personnel of the chapel to appear larger than before in the mid-1380's and temporarily to appear confused with extraneous elements within the household. In fact, if the Inter natos list for 1st October 1385<sup>2</sup> be examined, and the political members of the chapel be discounted, then the active members of the chapel work out at a dean and 15 gentlemen. The lists for 1384 and 1386 give the same result, except that in each case, the names of two men known from other sources to have been chapel clerks were omitted, and have to be restored. Similarly, the dean and 15 chapel clerks can be traced among those to whom black livery was delivered for the funeral of Joan, countess of Kent, mother of Richard 2, on 27 January 1386.<sup>3</sup> In reality, therefore, the chapel staff was still being maintained at a dean and 15 gentlemen, as it had been since the 1360's.

The next lists of chapel staff which survive postdate both the crisis of 1387-8, with the witch-hunt of Richard's supporters that followed it, and the King's resumption of his authority on 3 May 1389, with his at first cautious return to personal government. Not surprisingly, the Chapel Royal appears to have been somewhat trimmed. The politicians and administrators had all vanished from the lists, and the dean and only 12 gentlemen (including three digniores clerici) appeared in 1389/90<sup>4</sup>. However, by 1392/3 numbers were back to a dean

---

1. PRO E 101 398/9 fo.31r., 401/2 fo.42r., 401/6 m.24, 401/16 mm.23,26

2. PRO E 101 401/16 m.23

3. The reason for the omissions is unknown:- Edward Southworth and John Menhir in 1384 (PRO E 101 401/6 m.24) and Southworth and William Norton in 1386 (401/16 m.26). All three appear among the group of 15 chapel clerks to whom livery was delivered for the funeral of Joan, countess of Kent, (401/16m.31).

4. PRO E 101 402/5, fo.31v.

and 15 gentlemen; and something of a political flavour was returning to the Chapel, by the appearance of another man who was to become unpopular through being one whom the King delighted to honour, John Macclesfield.<sup>1</sup>

It is at this point in time that there begins an unmistakable increase in the number of gentlemen of the chapel. In September 1394, Richard left for an expedition to Ireland, hopefully to acquaint that part of his dominions with some sort of orderly government; he landed at Waterford on 2nd October 1394 with a large retinue which included the bulk of his Chapel, and remained there some eight months. The lists that appear on the account of the wages at war for 7 September 1394 - 21 April 1395 are understandably a bit muddled; but among the personnel that went on the campaign can be traced the Dean and at least 17 gentlemen of the Chapel.<sup>2</sup> That is, by September 1394 the chapel seems to have undergone some enlargement; and this policy of expansion continued after the expedition returned (with some success) in April 1395, ostensibly to deal with the Lollard threat.<sup>3</sup> At Christmas, 1395, the Dean and 22 gentlemen can be traced; by April 1396 they had been joined by another, Walter Whitby, making a total staff, with the dean, of 24.<sup>4</sup>

As before, this apparent enlargement of the Chapel may to some extent be illusory. Firstly, even among the ordinary clerks certain important court figures were once again being included; their real role there was not likely to have been as active chapel clerks, since they were amongst the confidants and advisers of the King in his return and further progress into arbitrary government. Of these John Macclesfield was one; others were Richard Maudelyn, close enough to the King to be a witness to his will in 1399<sup>5</sup>, and Thomas Merk, high enough in Richard's favour to be created bishop of Carlisle in 1397.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, and possibly consequently upon this,

- 
1. BM Add.MS 35115 fo.40v., PRO E 101 403/22 fo.12v. The dean and 13 gentlemen listed; John Exeter omitted, William Bury absent 'lying in London, gravely ill'.
  2. PRO E 101 402/20 ff.36v., 37r., 38r. The party included John Boor, the Dean; Thomas Marton, known from earlier accounts to have been a 'dignior clericus capelle'; 16 Clerici Capelle Regis; and John Macclesfield and Robert Lincoln, separated from the rest of the group by their being granted the privilege of escorts of four and two archers respectively. Of the 16 clerici capelle Regis (each with one archer) two are known to have been of only ancillary, sub-clerk, status:- Alan Leverton and John Stone (cf. PRO E 101 403/22, fo.13r., 403/10 fo.44v.)
  3. K.B. Macfarlane dismisses this chronicler's report as 'devoid of any truth'; John Wycliffe, p.132.
  4. PRO E 101 403/10 fo.43v.; for Whitby, see ff.44v., 39v.
  5. Translation given in J. Harvey, The Plantagenets, p.223
  6. Merk was so influential, and outspoken, a defender of Richard 2, that after the King's deposition in 1399, he had to be effectively deprived of his bishopric by being translated to a derelict see in partibus infidelium.

it is noticeable that the digniores clerici capelle no longer appear neatly by themselves at the end of the group of clerici hospicii who received livery allowance of 46s. 8d. p.a. Their names now appear mixed up confusedly with the others. This is a further manifestation of the return of the incipient breakdown of the old distinction between the specialised chapel staff and other important household clerks, which had first occurred in the mid-1380's. Possibly, only about 20 of these chapel clerks were genuine chapel staff. Nevertheless, it may still be concluded that, as well as regaining some of its political complexion, the Chapel underwent a considerable expansion in its number of gentlemen between 1394 and 1396, which was to prove a permanent increase of its strength.

Until the reign of Richard 2, the chapel had been essentially a specialised department of the household, with personnel selected for, and able to devote their time to, the duties which that particular department existed to provide. This restriction to its own specialised duties seems to have been breaking down during the periods of personal government of Richard 2; and this was a trend which Richard's successor recognised as one which required to be reversed. The reign of Henry 4 was of lasting importance in the history of the Chapel Royal, since it witnessed the application of reforms apparently designed to restore these former conditions, and thereby to restrict the role of the chapel staff in the royal household once again to just the observance and enactment of the sovereign's daily religious devotions. This, of course, could only enhance the opportunities enjoyed by the chapel staff for single-minded application of their talents to their duties. At a time when the campaign against Lollardy was entering its intensest phase, this may well be seen as evidence of a desire by the King to create conditions in which the splendour of the liturgy could be cultivated as richly as possible.

This was achieved in stages. The relevant sections of the list of chapel staff for 1402/3 is somewhat confused by accountants' errors, and the consequent linings-out and corrections. In one respect, however, there had already been a salutary return to previous conditions; the two digniores clerici capelle had been separated out again from the clerks of the household, and restored to their position at the end of the section. The dean and 21 gentlemen appear on this account; no men of political significance appear on the list, but the group of ordinary clerks was still a little confused by the appearance of two household administrators at the

head of their section.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1405 - 1409 period, however, the necessary reorganisation of the senior end of the chapel was taking place. The chapel list for 1405/6 shows that the post of dignior clericus capelle had been abolished; all the gentlemen of the chapel now enjoyed equal status, in receipt of 40s. p.a. as livery allowance. The dean and, again, 21 gentlemen can be traced.<sup>2</sup> To supersede the post of dignior clericus a new post had been created, that of King's chaplain (Capellanus Regis); this position has first been traced on an account of 1408/9, by which time there were six King's Chaplains.<sup>3</sup> These were totally unconnected with the Chapel Royal; but nevertheless their creation marks a very distinct turning-point in the Chapel's history. Under Henry 4 and Henry 5, the King's Chaplains were his almoner, his confessor, his confidants and his diplomats<sup>4</sup>; the creation of this post relieved the King of any necessity ever again to appoint such people to the Chapel. King's chaplains might in the future be nominated to bishoprics, and so be created princes of the church; but never again would a man holding the post of chaplain of the Chapel Royal be actually so important in the affairs of the realm that he would be so favoured, as had happened to Richard Metford, Richard Clifford and Thomas Merk in the reign of Richard 2. Evidently to Henry 4 the inclusion of royal advisers among his chapel staff seemed inappropriate, an inconsistency to be rectified; modern conditions required that the chapel be cultivated as just the department of the household concerned with conducting the royal devotions. This narrow definition of its duties much expanded its possible scope as an establishment for the encouragement and employment of a group of practising musicians, uncluttered by men whose real interests and duties lay elsewhere. From what is known of the personnel of the chapel from this period onwards, it is as a team purely of musicians that it must be considered, as much as it had been until the reign of Richard 2.

---

1. Walter Burton, controller of the household, and Roger Radbourne:-  
PRO E 101 404/21, fo.44v.

2. They are the first 21 names on the list of 137 clerks in receipt of 40s. livery allowance:- BM Harley 319 fo.46r.

3. PRO E 101 405/22 fo.31r. Two at least - Robert Walden and John Corynham - were former chaplains of the Chapel Royal.

4. See e.g. Henry 5's four King's Chaplains mentioned in his will of 1415:- J.H. Wylie, Henry V, vol.2, p.30 fn.5. The household duties of the King's Chaplains, then numbering at least four, were detailed in the "Black Book of the Household of Edward 4", PRO E 36 230 p.44

It is unfortunate that the list of 1405/6 is the last that survives for the reign of Henry 4; there is an almost total lack of information on the personnel of the chapel for the last 7 years of his reign, the longest gap since 1353. By Whitsuntide 1413 - that is, a few weeks after Henry 5's accession - the chapel consisted of a Dean and 24 gentlemen<sup>1</sup>, a slight increase over a Dean and 21 gentlemen in 1405/6. It is more likely that this degree of expansion had been achieved in the last few years of Henry 4's reign, than in the first few weeks of Henry 5's. On this account, and on almost all subsequent ones, the chaplains and clerks of the Chapel are distinguished from other members of the household by being specifically labelled as such.

Henry 5 pursued a policy of expanding the chapel yet further. On 6th June 1415 advance wages were paid to the dean and 27 gentlemen in anticipation of their accompanying the King on his invasion of Northern France that year.<sup>2</sup> The far better planned expedition of 1417 did succeed in establishing bridgeheads in Normandy, and early in 1418 on the King's order, the Chapel and its equipment crossed the channel to join him.<sup>3</sup> In October 1419 six singers of polyphony were conscripted in England by the King's Council and sent to join the Chapel Royal in France<sup>4</sup>; and in January 1420 a further six gentlemen crossed the Channel for the same purpose, this group including the composer Robert Chirbury.<sup>5</sup> While most of these reinforcements were no doubt merely sent to take up the places of chapel staff who had succumbed to the unhealthy conditions of life on campaign, it is probably also at this period that the number of gentlemen was raised to 32.

- 
1. PRO E 101 406/21 fo.27r. The chapel group does in fact include 26 names; the two extraneous names are those of two Dominican friars, Alan Hert and John Brotherton. They are listed again with the chapel in 1415 (PRO E 101 45/5 m.11); thereafter, although they continue to appear on succeeding accounts (e.g. 407/4 ff.13r., 41r.) they are never again listed with the chapel, and thus are more likely to have served as preachers and/or confessors than as fulltime chapel clerks.
  2. PRO E 101 45/5 m.11, E 404 31/44. Even if they got across the Channel, it seems unlikely that the Chapel staff actually went any further than Harfleur.
  3. CPR 1416 -22, pp.127,132.
  4. PRO E 404 35/247; Waltero Wodehall uni organistarum cathedralis ecclesie sancti Pauli London' ordinato per consilium Regis ad proficiscendum in comitiva aliorum quinque organistarum versus partes exteras in presentiam Regis ad serviendum Regi ibidem infra capelliam suam:- PRO E 403 643 mm.2-3, 6.
  5. PRO E 403 643 m.16.

The Treaty of Troyès was signed on 20 May 1420, and Henry 5 and Catherine of Valois, daughter of the defeated French King, were married at Troyès on 2nd June 1420. In January 1421 Henry, his bride, and his household returned to England<sup>1</sup> and Catherine was crowned Queen of England in Westminster Abbey on 24 February 1421. The Chapel Royal was in attendance and livery was supplied to a very substantial Chapel personnel totalling the dean and 32 gentlemen.<sup>2</sup>

Of the remaining categories of personnel of the chapel, only the yeoman-clerks and choristers need be traced, since other staff were ancillary and did not participate in the conduct of the services. Two yeoman-clerks can be traced in 1388, 1389 and 1390<sup>3</sup>; and two in 1415 and three at Easter 1416.<sup>4</sup> This category seems to have undergone no expansion in numbers at any time; there still were only two of them in 1470/71 when the Black Book of the Household of Edward 4 was compiled.<sup>5</sup>

Of those whose names are known, many subsequently became fully-fledged gentleman-clerks, and it would appear that these clerici valecti were youths and young men in much the same circumstances as the original clerks of the second form at e.g. St. George's Chapel, Windsor and Leicester College. Only once are they known to have risen above 3 in number, which is when they reached 5 in October 1385.<sup>6</sup> This occurred not because of any decision permanently to increase the number of yeoman-clerks, but because three former choristers of the Chapel Royal<sup>7</sup> had been expelled prematurely from King's Hall, Cambridge<sup>8</sup>, and were taken back into the household as a temporary addition to the number of yeoman-clerks.

1. MMB, p.243 fn.3

2. PRO E 101 407/4 fo.36r. The chapel group begins with five household officials, and closes with the two clerici corone.

3. Robert Lincoln and William Lane:- CCR 1385-89, pp.613,616, 582; CCR 1389-92 p.169; CPR 1388-92 p.16.

4. 1415:- John Burwell and John Mildenhale (PRO E 101 45/5 m9); 1416:- the same and Roger Noble (E 101 406/26, BM Stowe 1043, fo.219v.)

5. PRO E 36 230 p.69

6. PRO E 101 401/16 mm.23,24 (where for Christmas 10, read Christmas 9 Richard 2), 27,26.

7. Robert Lincoln, John Hadham and William Lane; they had been choristers in 1377-9:- PRO E 101 400/4 m.21

8. A.E.Stamp, Admissions to Trinity College, Cambridge, p. 107; A.C. Cobban, The King's Hall, pp. 172, 187.

At this moment (October 1385) there were five choristers of the chapel.<sup>1</sup> Three set off for Cambridge to occupy the vacant places at King's Hall<sup>2</sup>, and because of the arrival of the three extra yeoman-clerks, there seems to have been no immediate hurry to replace them. There were two choristers only, until April 1386<sup>3</sup>; then four new boys were recruited bringing the total to six by October 1386.<sup>4</sup>

The number of choristers was maintained at much this kind of level during the reign of Henry 4; four boys of the chapel were issued with summer livery at Whitsun 1409<sup>5</sup>. By Henry 5, however, the number of boys was very substantially increased; already by Easter 1416 their number stood at nine.<sup>6</sup> The boys did not accompany the Chapel on the 1415 expedition to France<sup>7</sup>; but they crossed to Normandy with the rest of the Chapel in 1418, and there their numbers were either kept up, or increased, by the conscription of choristers in England. Two boys accompanied the six clerks who crossed the Channel to France in late January 1420<sup>8</sup>; but already on the 14th January the King's letters patent had been issued to one of the clerks of the chapel, John Pyamour, to recruit yet more boys from England.<sup>9</sup> Pyamour's trip was successful; by 5th February he was on his way back to Normandy with two choristers conscripted from Lincoln Cathedral.<sup>10</sup> By February 1421, when Queen Catherine was crowned in Westminster Abbey, there were sixteen choristers of the Chapel Royal<sup>11</sup> - the largest number of choristers which the Chapel ever contained prior to the Reformation, and - quite possibly - at any time.

1. PRO E 101 401/6 mm.17,24,23:- Oct., Dec.1384, June 1385.

2. *ibid.*, m.27; PRO E 101 348/16, attached warrant no.1

3. PRO E 101 401/16 mm.23, 24 (where for Christmas 10, read Christmas 9 Richard 2), 27.

4. *ibid.*, m.26

5. PRO E 101 405/22, fo.30r.

6. PRO E 101 406/26; the rough lists from which this roll was compiled are now among E 101 407/9; a transcript of c.1700 is now BM Stowe 1043, fo.219v.

7. PRO E 101 328/6, m.1r.

8. PRO E 403 643 m.16

9. PRO C 66 402, m.11v; CPR 1416-22, p.272

10. Johanni Pyamoure uni clericorum de Capella Regis. In denariis sibi liberatis per manus proprios pro expensis suis et duorum puerorum missorum de mandato Regis de Cathedrali ecclesia beate Marie Lincoln' versus partes externas in presenciam suam ad sibi serviendum infra capellam suam ibidem ac passagiis suis maris ex causa predicta per breve de privato sigillo inter mandatos de hoc termino x li. Issue Roll, Michaelmas 7 Henry 5:- PRO E 403 643 m.16.

11. PRO E 101 407/4, ff.21r., 46r.

It is now possible to assess precisely the chronology of the expansion of the Chapel Royal which took place between 1384 and 1422. Until 1394 it would seem that the Chapel remained constituted as it had been since c.1360 - a dean, thirteen gentleman-priests, two gentleman-clerks, two yeoman-clerks, and 4-6 choristers. Between 1394 and 1396 Richard 2 increased the number of gentlemen to 20 or 21; Henry 4 retained these dimensions while restoring to the chapel its character as a body of musicians concerned solely with the observance of the King's daily religious devotions. Henry 5 then built on these achievements, and almost doubled the personnel of the choir which he inherited. By the end of his reign the chapel royal had become an organisation on the largest scale, consisting of a Dean, 32 gentlemen, 2-3 yeoman-clerks, and 16 choristers, besides the sergeant of the vestry, subclerks of the vestry, sumptermen and other ancillary staff. This added up to a mammoth choir exceeding 50 voices.

It remains to enquire into Henry 5's motives for maintaining so enormous a household chapel. There is no evidence to suggest that the sacred music being composed at this period demanded for its performance forces any larger than those which had long been available; there can thus be no musical explanation for the expansion of the Chapel Royal. The King's motives, therefore, were probably compounded of a number of extraneous, completely non-musical elements. In the first place, Henry 5 is known to have been a man of great, if conventional, piety, and no doubt he was in part reacting to the opinion, commonly enough held, that the more people maintained to participate in the worship of God, the more pleased He would be with it. Sheer ostentation may well have been another motive - a recognition that only in so grand a manner was it appropriate for a great Christian prince to order his daily and festal religious devotions. Henry 5 could hardly have been unconscious of the fact that as both King of England and (after 1420) King-designate of France, there was in all Christian Europe no prince greater than he; and it was necessary that in all respects his public and diplomatic image should reflect the exalted position to which God had called him.

However, although Henry 5 was responsible for the major phase of the expansion of the Chapel Royal, it may not be overlooked that it had begun 20 years earlier, back in the 1390's. At this time the English king was far more pre-occupied with subduing domestic problems at home than with impressing foreigners abroad. Lollardy had troubled Richard 2, and part of his response was the expansion of the Chapel Royal; Lollardy troubled Henry 5 even more, and so in his expansion of the Chapel Royal, this purely insular pressure rendering desirable such public enhancement of the traditional manner of worship cannot be ignored. Indeed, it is



conceivable that the practice of maintaining a large professional household chapel was adopted by the English Kings of this period almost wholly in response to the need to confound Lollardy by a conspicuous demonstration of faith in the traditional manner of worship; and that it was European princes who subsequently emulated this English example, rather than the other way round.

The expansion of the Chapel to the proportions achieved by 1421 was not retained after Henry 5's death. Whatever his motives for maintaining so large a chapel, it was evident to the regency council that they were based on the fulfilment of needs applicable to a King who had been an international warrior and statesman. Since the new King was neither, the Council pruned the royal household, and with it, the chapel, to a scale more commensurate to the needs of a 9 month old baby. Of the 16 choristers of Henry 5's chapel, five were packed off to fellowships at King's Hall, Cambridge, being admitted there on 21 December 1422<sup>1</sup>, and five more left by other routes. At least by 15 June 1423, their numbers had been reduced to six<sup>2</sup>, and there continued to be only six choristers of the Chapel through the rest of Henry's minority.

The 32 gentlemen of Henry 5's chapel were reduced to 20, probably by the end of 1422, certainly by Christmas 1425.<sup>3</sup> At this point, their numbers probably continued to stand until the end of the King's minority in 1437. A dean, 20 gentlemen and 6 choristers was still no mean size for the Chapel Royal; such dimensions represent the size of Chapel considered appropriate to a child king.

- 
1. Walter Aumener, William Rote, John Bowyer, John Garlond and William Bull - A.E. Stamp, Admissions to Trinity College, Cambridge, p. 116. Thomas Myldenale was technically admitted the same day, but remained a chorister of the Chapel at least until June 1423. (PRO E 101 407/13 fo.29r).
  2. ed. H. Nicolas, Proceedings and Ordinances, vol.3 p.104
  3. PRO E 101 408/25 fo.lv.

4.2.2.B. The household chapel of Thomas, Duke of Clarence  
(1388-1421)

For the period 1380-1425 it is possible to give precise statistics for only one aristocratic household chapel out of the many which are known to have existed. During his lifetime, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, was a figure of far more importance than would be indicated by the brief notices of him which appear in general histories of the period. He was the second of the four sons of Henry 4; he was, therefore, the eldest of the three brothers of Henry 5 and as such, heir presumptive to the throne throughout Henry's reign. He was a notable military commander in the French wars, until he tarnished his reputation by getting killed in battle at Beaugé on 22nd March 1421. Within his household he maintained a large chapel consisting of a dean, 24 gentlemen and 4 choristers<sup>1</sup>; Instructor of the Choristers, and second on the list of clerks, was the composer Lionel Power.<sup>2</sup>

At Michaelmas 1418 the Duke was away campaigning with Henry 5 in Normandy, while his wife and their household remained behind in England. However, in the late summer of 1419, Duke Thomas returned briefly to England, apparently to make arrangements for his household to join him in Normandy; he himself returned to France in October 1419, and his wife and household crossed the channel to join him in November.<sup>3</sup> Life on campaign seems rapidly to have taken its inevitable toll on the chapel staff; within a few months the Duke's agents in England were riding to Wells, Exeter, Crediton, Lincoln and York to recruit fresh singers, and apparently between February and November 1420 alone four chaplains and one clerk crossed the Channel to join the Duke's service.<sup>4</sup> When Henry 5 returned to England in January 1421, Duke Thomas remained in charge of the campaign against the Dauphin, as captain of Normandy and lieutenant of France<sup>5</sup>, and his household remained with him. After his death in March 1421, his body was brought back to England for burial; his household was paid up to 15 August, and then the bulk of it was dispersed. However, the dean and 15 chaplains and clerks of the chapel attended the funeral in Canterbury Cathedral on 25th September; their expenses back to London were then paid from Duke Thomas's estate<sup>6</sup>, and then they too were free to look for other employment.

- 
1. Account of Receiver-General 1418-21:-WstDC WAM 12163 fo.16v. The sums of money paid as salaries to the members of the chapel suggest that its numbers remained pretty well constant throughout the period covered by this account.
  2. ibid., fo.14r:- Et in denariis solutis Lionell Power magistro dictorum puerorum pro calciatura camisiis et aliis necessariis suis per tempus compoti per parcellam examinatam etc. xxij s vij d ob.
  3. ibid., ff.10r.-25r. passim. There was considerable re-equipment of the chapel with fresh books and ornaments for the passage to France:-ibid. fo.14r.
  4. ibid., ff.14r.14v. 5. details of Clarence's career drawn from C.L.Kingsford, 'Thomas, Duke of Clarence', Dictionary of National Biography, vol.19, pp.638-9.
  6. WstDC WAM 12163 ff.14v., 23r.

#### 4.2.2. C. Other household chapels.

Of aristocratic household chapels, that maintained by Thomas, Duke of Clarence was probably merely one of the more prominent among many maintained by the princes of the land and the princes of the church. Only chance references, however, remain to demonstrate that such household chapels did exist. There are references to the chapel of Henry, earl of Derby (later Henry 4) on the account of the Great Wardrobe of his household for 1391/2<sup>1</sup>; on the same document there are references to 'Perott and housy, clerks, singers of the chapel' of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and Aquitaine, Henry's father.<sup>2</sup> In 1412 the household of Henry, prince of Wales, eldest surviving son of Henry 4 (later Henry 5), included 'Nicholaus organplayer et Johannes Compton cl[er]ic [us] Cant [or]'.<sup>3</sup>

Of other great magnates of the period, John Holland, earl of Huntingdon and sometime Duke of Exeter (c.1355-1400) left a large quantity of vestments belonging to his household chapel at his death, including items for boys<sup>4</sup>. A processioner now in the British Museum is inscribed 'De la chapelle Thomas Fitz au Roy Duc de Glouc<sup>r</sup>'.<sup>5</sup> - Thomas of Woodstock (1355-97), earl of Buckingham and Duke of Gloucester, third son of Edward 3. Amongst singers entertained by the Warden of the Lady Chapel at Worcester Cathedral in 1392 was dom Nicholas Stoke, clerk (? of the chapel) of Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick<sup>6</sup>; the Chapel-Warden later entertained clerks of the chapel of Joan, Lady Bergavenny, widow of William, Lord Beauchamp of Bergavenny (younger brother of Thomas, earl of Warwick) in 1420, 1421 and 1422<sup>7</sup>. Henry, Lord Scrope of Masham (Yorkshire) maintained an elaborate household chapel, eleven books from which were presented by Henry 5 to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, after Scrope's execution for treason in 1415.<sup>8</sup>

1. PRO DL 28 1/3 ff.17v., 18r.

2. Et liberat' de dono domini [of the Lord earl, i.e.] perott et housy clericis cantatoribus Capelle domini Ducis Aquitanie.....:- ibid., fo.3v.

3. according to some 16th century transcripts of extracts from accounts of the Great Wardrobe of his household:- BM Harley 4304 fo.21r.

4. CPR 1399-1401, pp.513-4

5. BM Harley 2942 fo.2v.

6. WorDC C250:- In expensis domini Nicholai Stoke Clerici Comit'is Warr' et aliorum Cantorum de Evesham in hostilaria per vices xv d.

7. WorDC C271, 272a, 272. The clerks of the chapel of Margaret Beauchamp, dowager countess of Warwick, were mentioned on an account of the keeper of her household for 1405/6:- PRO E 101 513/2.

8. K.B. Macfarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England, pp.97,237-8; WndDC xv 56 22, and verso:- the books were 4 graduals, 4 antiphoners, a legend in two volumes, and an ordinal.

Amongst the princes of the church, references have been found to chaplains, clerks or choristers of the household chapels of Thomas Arundel, bishop of Ely (1373-88, and later Archbishop of Canterbury)<sup>1</sup>; William Wykham, bishop of Winchester (1366-1404)<sup>2</sup>; Henry Bowet, archbishop of York (1407-1423)<sup>3</sup>; Richard Young, bishop of Rochester (1404-1418), John Wakeryng, bishop of Norwich (1415-1425), and John Fordham, bishop of Ely (1388-1425)<sup>4</sup>.

That both the temporal and spiritual aristocracy maintained fully-staffed household chapels at this period seems indisputable; but new sources of evidence will have to emerge before very much more than this can be said.

#### 4.2.3. The response of the Old-Established Cathedrals and Colleges.

The establishment's reaction to the challenges presented by the Lollards was apparent not only in the nature and emphasis of the new foundations of the period. It was equally evident in the earnest manner in which the livelier of the old-established foundations sought to shake themselves out of such lethargy as had been setting in. Priests and clergy such as those who staffed cathedral and collegiate churches stood charged by the Lollards with wilful concealment of religious truth; with concoction and promotion of falsehood for private advantage; with malevolent and pernicious irrelevance to the genuine spiritual needs of the society they claimed to serve; and with hypocrisy in their indifference and carelessness in the manner in which they undertook even those misguided duties which they had obliged themselves to observe. Contemporary visitation records indicate that there was no little truth in this last charge.<sup>5</sup> It appears to have been appreciated that the best defence to these charges was a mixture of judicious reform and earnest counter-blast. After reform of the manner in which the traditional ministry of these institutions had been carried out, it would be possible to demonstrate, by conscientious application, both the legitimacy and efficacy of these practices, and the wrongheadedness of any criticism of them.

1. N. Orme, English Schools in the Middle Ages, pp.39,322

2. A.F. Leach, A History of Winchester College, p.67

3. B. Trowell, Music under the Later Plantagenets, pp.114,266

4. ed. E.F.Jacob, Register of Henry Chichele, vol.2.pp.165,313,328

5. See e.g. the injunctions sent to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, after a visitation in 1378:- T.Rymer, Foedera, vol.4 p.50

At the secular cathedrals, a distinct reinvigoration of religious life and devotional practice was clearly in evidence, in a manner wholly consistent with the priorities and values which were inspiring the founders of new institutions. Dr. Edwards has noted that at Salisbury there was a remarkable revival of cathedral life at the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th. The long succession of absentee deans ended in 1379, and there was a general return of the greater dignitaries to residence; and after the long dispute between the bishop and the chapter was ended by the award of 1392, Dean Montague directed a great overhaul of the cathedral's activities and administration in anticipation of the first episcopal visitation of the cathedral for at least 130 years.<sup>1</sup>

Also, it was at this time that vigorous attempts began to be made to secure the canonisation of Osmund, the first Norman bishop of Old Salisbury. One significant factor in the campaign that was mounted was the chapter's exploitation of the tradition that it was Osmund who first drew up the Use of Salisbury, "incomparable in the world". This, with his saintly life, his miracles and his foundation of the Salisbury chapter, was a main reason for urging his canonisation.<sup>2</sup> Salisbury Use was one of the most elaborate of all liturgies; that an apparently unfounded tradition concerning its authorship could be exploited as justification for canonisation, shows clearly the degree to which cultivation of the outward trappings of worship had become important almost as an end in itself.

Being so proud of the Salisbury liturgy, it would have been inappropriate for the Chapter to do anything but demonstrate it, in its own church, at its very finest. To achieve this, it was clearly desirable to maintain the cathedral's choral forces at full strength. For some time past this had not been done. As has been seen, a full complement of vicars-choral numbered 52.<sup>3</sup> By a calculation basically identical to that employed on the data for Wells Cathedral<sup>4</sup>, it is possible to calculate the mean number of vicars who attended service each day with sufficient regularity to earn their daily penny from the chapter. As explained above<sup>5</sup>, this calculation will give an absolute minimum for the number of vicars, and will usually be some four or five below the full number of vicars on the books at the given time.

1. K. Edwards, "The Cathedral Church of Salisbury," VCH Wiltshire, vol.3, p.176; cf. Stat.Sal. pp.96-8

2. K. Edwards, "The Cathedral Church of Salisbury", VCH Wiltshire, vol.3 pp.158, 173, 177-8.

3. above. p. 2007.

4. though in this case, rather more complicated and giving results subject to a slightly greater margin of error; the method is explained in Appendix A3 below, pp. A014-6.

5. See above, pp. 2008-9.

As has been seen, the Black Death of 1348 seems to have had little lasting effect on the Salisbury vicars. The average attendance at service in 1343 and 1347 stood at around 47 and 48; in 1350 it stood at nearly 50<sup>1</sup>. A full complement of 52 vicars was recorded as being on the books on 30 May 1352, though 6 were absent from the cathedral.<sup>2</sup> However, the Secunda Pestis - the second great visitation of plague in 1361 - had an effect far more lethal. In that year, mean attendance stood at 35.98 - 16 below full numbers; and 10 years later it was still standing at much the same level, hovering around 36 and 37 throughout 1369-71. By 1377 a recovery had set in, with attendance averaging out at a little over 40, and through the 1380's the recovery maintained its momentum. By 1391 the mean attendance figure stood at over 46<sup>3</sup>; and indeed, a complete list of all the cathedral vicars dated 8 June 1390 names 49, one vacancy existing in each of the three ranks of Holy Orders.<sup>4</sup>

It seems apparent that the general revival of cathedral life, beginning in the 1380's and 1390's, involved a somewhat belated will to repair the damage done by the Secunda Pestis, and to return to the policy of maintaining the full complement of 52 vicars intact. The cathedral stretched its resources to supply for the performance of the liturgy the maximum forces that it was equipped to provide. This policy remained in force all through the first half of the fifteenth century. At least until 1450, mean attendance never fell below 42; and especially in the period 1405-1418 (the best documented part of the period) it generally exceeded 46<sup>5</sup>, indicating a total complement in excess of 50. At visitations of the cathedral in November 1432, April 1440 and April 1447, there were present 49, 51 and 48 vicars respectively.<sup>6</sup> It is evident that a consistent policy of maintaining at full strength even as large a choir as that of Salisbury was considered worth the effort required, and - if mere numbers were all that mattered - was achieved with considerable success. Whether the sort of men being taken on were really worthy of their job is another matter. Visitation records and Chapter Act books would suggest that, towards the end of the first half of the 15th century anyway, numbers were being maintained only at the cost of a serious loss in quality of the recruits. This, however, must await discussion in its place.<sup>7</sup>

1. SDC, Communar's A/cs. 1-4.

2. SDC Reg. Corfe fo.42v.

3. SDC, Communar's A/Cs 5, 6a-9,10,15.

4. ACL Archiep.Reg. Courtenay fo.150v. 5. SDC Communar's A/cs 20-37.

6. SBR Ep. Reg. Nevill fo.49v.; Aiscough, 2nd foliation, ff.80v.,86r.

7. See below, pp. 5015-20.

At Wells Cathedral the establishment reaction to Lollardy may have been somewhat less positive than at Salisbury, but it is difficult to be certain, since Wells has yet found no Dr. Edwards to write a history of its chapter. As has been seen, the choir was, in size, second only to Salisbury, with an effective complement of 50 vicars.<sup>1</sup> For the years 1327/8, 1343/4 and 1346/7, prior to the Black Death, it seems probable that the Chapter's duty was also its policy, and that the number of vicars-choral was maintained at full strength. For the plague years, no direct evidence is available, but they seem to have taken their toll; a complete list of the vicars contributing to the clerical poll-tax of 1377 numbers only 38.<sup>2</sup> From the time that the evidence from the Communar's Accounts resumes in 1392/3 there is nothing to suggest that the chapter ever again succeeded in restoring the number of vicars to its full complement of 50. Average attendance for 1392/3 was 38.8 and for 1394/5 40.7, suggesting that a recovery to some 45 vicars had been contrived; thereafter, until 1437/8 average attendance fluctuated within one or two points of 35<sup>3</sup>, suggesting perhaps that in this period, the chapter considered that 40 vicars choral was a realistic total at which to aim.

Any attempt to guess at the reasons why this 20% contraction, so uncharacteristic of the general tendencies of the period, should have been effected, can only be speculative - the surviving documentary evidence gives no hints at all. It is not likely that the reason was a shortage of funds. Each canon continued to pay in his contribution to the stipend of his vicar, even if his stall was one of those for which no vicar any longer performed the service; the choir's loss in numbers was simply the Fabric's gain in cash, for the stipends of vacant stalls were paid into the Fabric account.<sup>4</sup> Under these circumstances a shortage of suitable men seems the most likely reason for any decision to reduce the choir from 50 to 40.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. See above, chapter 2, p. 2008.

2. PRO E 179 4/1 m.1.

3. WlsDC Communar's A/cs, years quoted.

4. See receipts sections of WlsDC Fabric A/cs.

5. On 1st October 1388 the Dean and Chapter granted an extension of the probationary period to be served by a prospective vicar in the case of one John Lye. He had not shown diligence in learning the antiphoner, psalter and hymnal completely by heart, and could not be admitted a perpetual vicar; but propter honestatem morum dicti Johannis, he was granted an extra year to learn his service more fully:- WlsDC Liber Albus I fo.294r. This reluctance to send away a man who - even if inefficient in his job - at least caused no-one any trouble, suggests some difficulty in getting men any better than he to do it.

More characteristic of the period, however, is the appearance of a certain willingness to restore strict observance of directives for the conduct of Divine Service, even if austere and inconvenient. Some relaxation had been allowed to creep in concerning the time of the performance of matins. Strictly, matins began at midnight; but a custom had developed whereby during the three summer months it was celebrated at some daylight hour - probably day-break. A return to the rigours of the past is noted in the Communar's Accounts for 1400/01 and 1407/8, where greater than usual expense on candle-wax was reported "because matins in choir is being observed during the night between Trinity Sunday and St. Peter ad Vincula, whereas it was accustomed to be sung by day"<sup>1</sup>.

The vicissitudes experienced by the chapter of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in trying to keep full their number of vicars during the plague years, have already been detailed.<sup>2</sup> By October 1384, however, problems appear to have been mastered, with the presence of a full complement of 13 vicars, 4 clerks and 6 choristers.<sup>3</sup> The obit accounts on the Treasurer's Rolls of the period 1385/6 - 1422/3 show that, although there were occasional lapses, it was unusual for any section of the choral staff to be seriously under-strength for any long period of time. Rather, it regularly occurred that the accountant was able to report the attendance of a full choir.<sup>4</sup> The chapter seem to have had little difficulty in putting to good use the higher wages, and better working conditions, which St. George's could offer to its staff. In this, as well as in the far less cumbersome nature of their choir, they had a clear advantage over the chapter of a secular cathedral such as Wells, at a time when there were strong constraints in operation to maintain the personnel of all religious institutions at full strength.

- 
1. e.g. WlsDC Communar's A/c 1407/8:- In cera empta...xiiiij s vj d.  
Et eo plus solito quia matutine in choro dicuntur in nocte a festo Sancte Trinitatis usque ad vincula sancti Petri que solebant dici in die.
  2. See above, pp. 3019-20.
  3. WndDC v B 1.
  4. WndDC xv 34 15-32.



### 4.3. The genesis of the lay clerk.

One prominent feature of the intensification of the provision made for the conduct of divine worship in this period is the willingness of religious institutions to begin to create for their service a new class of church musician. Prior to c.1390, all men of any consequence in the music of the church had been in major orders; they were men who had felt a call to become priests of the Lord and vessels of his grace, and who happened to possess talents that enabled them to contribute most to the service of God by singing in the choirs of the major churches. The new class of church musician was the lay clerk. These were men who were pleased to serve the church from outside it; men content to make church music their profession and career while remaining amongst the laity, able to marry, neither willing (for their own part) nor obliged (by their employers) to become an interior part of the church establishment by entering holy orders. The career lay-clerk is a phenomenon not observed before c.1390 at the earliest, and would seem to have no precedent. His appearance poses an important question which as yet it has not proved possible to answer. In employing lay clerks, was the church merely responding to a general reluctance among men to undertake ordination, which was starving it of suitably qualified musicians in holy orders; or was it in fact beginning to tap for the first time a large reserve of lay musical talent which had always been there, but which the church had never seen fit to exploit before? This latter is an intriguing possibility, but no investigation of it has yet been possible.

The employment of lay clerks could be contrived in two different ways. In one way, a religious institution could create a totally new post, transferring to it the direction of all or part of its musical life, and appoint to it a layman from outside. Such was the post of Cantor, created by certain of the greater monasteries to direct the singing of their newly-established Lady Chapel Choirs<sup>1</sup>; such also was the post of Master of the SongSchool at St. Mary, Warwick<sup>2</sup>, a product of the peculiar circumstances of that particular college.

---

1. See below, pp. 4089-4100.

2. See above, pp. 4016-8.

The second way of contriving the employment of lay clerks involved modifying the nature of one of the ranks of singers in a liturgical choir. Any such choir was created, and existed, to perform the liturgy, and the interdependent construction of liturgy and choir was hallowed by tradition; neither, therefore, could be subjected to any gross alteration merely to accommodate the creation of a new type of singer. One of the existing ranks could, however, be appropriately modified. As has been seen, in all choirs the liturgical functions ascribed by the Consuetudinary to the "clerks of thesecond form" were in practice allocated to the younger priest-vicars and the clerks in deacon's, subdeacon's and minor orders. If it was required to employ laymen, then they could very simply be appointed to the places of, and substituted for, the clerks in major and minor orders. The only liturgical impropriety to which this would give rise would be the lack of anyone in the orders of deacon and subdeacon to read respectively the gospel and epistle at Mass - not an insuperable problem by any means.

However, the recruitment of laymen to liturgical choirs by this method would involve a far-reaching transformation in the nature of the clerkships themselves. As has been observed, the clerkships were originally designed to be filled not by anyone of mature years, but rather by youths and young men on their way to ordination as priests and promotion to vicarages-choral; they were few in number, not well paid, and involved the performance of many humble and routine jobs around the chapel<sup>1</sup>. If career professional lay musicians were to be appointed to these posts, their nature would have to be radically altered. Firstly, new foundations would have to make provision for larger numbers of them, preferably divided into two classes:- superior clerks who were the professional singers and musicians, and junior clerks who continued to perform the humble jobs around the chapel which still had to be done by someone. Secondly, they were now career clerks, making a lifetime's profession of being a clericus secunde forme; they would have to be paid as professional men of talent and experience, since it would not for long be sufficient to offer them the modest sums considered appropriate for youthful apprentice vicars-choral.

These changes in the nature of the clerkships may be observed to have been beginning in the period under consideration, and all were effectively under way by c.1425. The total transformation however was a long, slow process, not complete until the end of the 15th century. The rise in the esteem given to laymen employed to contribute musicianship to church services was starting from scratch, was slow to evolve, and took two to three generations to complete.

1. See above, pp. 2049-51, 3009-13

#### 4.3.1. Newly-founded colleges.

It was, of course, easiest for the newly founded colleges to give effect to these changes, since their statutes could be so formulated as to take account of them. In fact, the genesis of the movement can be dated with some precision by close examination of the statutes of various colleges. Clearly it had not begun by c.1391-2, since the formulation of the constitution of the choirs of Winchester College and New College, Oxford, was clearly undertaken at a moment before any modifications to the traditional patterns were considered to be desirable. Colleges founded before c.1380 had been considered quite amply equipped with 3 or 4 clerks<sup>1</sup>; Winchester College and New College both continued in this tradition, each with only three clerks.<sup>2</sup>

The Winchester College statutes, essentially a legal rather than a practical document, contain no account of what precisely the duties of the chapel clerks were to be; it is clear, however, that they were to be of much the same status as the clerks of earlier colleges. They enjoyed free board, lodging and livery, and a meagre salary of only 20s. p.a.<sup>3</sup> In 1400 one was described as being 'in loco Diaconi'<sup>4</sup>, and it was probably intended that one be in deacon's orders, one in subdeacon's, and one in minor orders. They did not eat in hall with the more significant members of the college - the warden, fellows, chaplains, grammar master, usher and scholars; in fact they waited on them as servants during the meal, and themselves fed at a second sitting with the rest of the more menial servants.<sup>5</sup> For their commons they were allowed 10d. per week<sup>6</sup>, then the going rate for adult servants. Their livery was to be of the same material as that provided for the schoolboys<sup>7</sup>; in other respects also, they were allowed no more precedence than the 8-18 year olds who comprised the scholars of the college<sup>8</sup>. In status and salary alike, these chapel clerks were pretty lowly creatures, and in no way represent any advance on their predecessors at colleges of earlier foundation.<sup>9</sup>

1. e.g. Leicester College and St. George's Chapel Windsor; see above, pp.3003-5.

2. See above, pp. 4013-4.

3. Statute 26:- T.F. Kirby, Annals of Winchester College, pp.497-8

4. ibid., p.67

5. Statute 14:- ibid., p.488

6. Statute 13:- ibid., p.487

7. Statute 27:- ibid., p.499

8. See e.g. Statute 29:- ibid., p.502

9. Some of the miscellaneous duties undertaken by the clerks in 1398/9 are mentioned ibid., pp.146-7

By the time the Statutes of Fotheringhay College were compiled, c.1415, the idea of adapting the clerkships to cope with laymen was clearly one that had to be taken account of, even if it was too early fully to accept and incorporate it. Consequently, the statutes left the status of the clerks in some confusion, as their editor noted.<sup>1</sup> The importance of their slot in the composition of the college was recognised in their number - eight in all,<sup>2</sup> twice the number standard in colleges of earlier foundation. The original intention was that four should be in deacon's orders, and all the other four apparently in sub-deacon's. Once the college was fully manned, the founders' intentions were that its chaplains should, if possible, be recruited from its own ministri inferiores. A vacant chaplaincy was to be filled by one of the deacon-clerks, to whose vacant place should be chosen one of the subdeacons; while to his vacant place was to be chosen the most able of the choristers.<sup>3</sup>

This seems traditional enough. However, tendencies for clerkships to be opened to men not in major orders at all, but to laymen with no intention of entering orders, were also recognised in the compilation of the statutes, though not fully absorbed and allowed for. Further statutes refer significantly to clerks 'deacon, or occupying the place of a deacon', and to 'clerks' subdeacon, or occupying the place of a subdeacon'<sup>4</sup>. Hereby, the door was being left open to the employment of lay-clerks, should the master and chaplains find it expedient. And find it so, they did. The original division of the clerks into 4 deacons and 4 subdeacons was soon abandoned; indeed, in practice, it may never have been observed at all. In its place was substituted two degrees of lay-clerk. At a visitation in 1438, it was remarked that there was no-one in the college in deacon's orders to read the gospel<sup>5</sup>; by then, in fact, all the clerks were laymen, the division now being into four clerici generosi and four clerici valecti<sup>6</sup>. Indeed, both in 1438 and 1442 it was claimed that such was the statutory provision of clerks, and had been since the first creation of the college.<sup>7</sup>

1. ed. A.H. Thompson, The Statutes of the College...of Fotheringhay, p.256

2. Statute 1:- ibid., p.270. 3. Statute 3:- ibid., p.272

4. Statute 4:- ibid., p.273.

5. ed. A.H. Thompson, Visitations of Religious Houses in the diocese of Lincoln, vol.2 pp.95,98

6. ibid., pp.92,99 (John Lymster's evidence). 7. ibid., pp.99,108

Indeed, it is possible that, in practice, the statutes had been appropriately modified from the very beginning. Certainly, a considerably enhanced status for the clerks had been written into the original statutes, in terms both of the level of the salaries which were to be paid to them, and in the reduced differential between themselves and the chaplains. At St. George's Windsor, founded 1348, the priests received £8. p.a., the deacon and subdeacon clerks £5. 6. 8d. p.a. and the clerks in minor orders £4. p.a.<sup>1</sup> At the less wealthy Fotheringhay College, priorities were such that it was the chaplains, not the clerks, who were to be disadvantaged by its narrower resources. Each chaplain holding no administrative office received £6.13. 4d. p.a.; each clerk, deacon or occupying the office of a deacon £5.13. 4d. p.a.; each clerk, subdeacon or occupying the office of a subdeacon £4.13. 4d. p.a.<sup>2</sup> In terms of wages, the clerks were in some instances already beginning to close the gap between themselves and the chaplains.

By 1423, when the statutes of the college of Stoke-by-Clare were compiled, the concept of the lay-clerk was well established, and he was incorporated into the constitution of the college without any ambiguity. One of the smallest of the major colleges founded in this period, it was endowed with only four clerks, divided into two clerici maiores and two clerici minores. Nowhere in the statutes was there any demand that any of them be in any holy orders at all; it was merely required that they be unmarried. All were obliged to constant residence, and to constant attendance at service. The two lesser clerks were paid £4. 3. 4d. p.a.; they took charge of the vestry and its contents, and were responsible for such routine and humble jobs as ringing the bells, lighting the candles, maintaining the clock and preparing the altars - the traditional work of chapel clerks. The two clerici maiores received £5. p.a. Their job was simply to serve in the choir, acting as rectores chori on festivals; one of their qualifications was the ability to sing improved polyphonic music.<sup>3</sup> It seems probable that the categories of clericus maior and clericus minor at Stoke-by-Clare reflected pretty closely the distinctions between the clericus generosus and clericus valectus as they evolved at Fotheringhay.<sup>4</sup>

1. Statute 3:- WndDC iv B i fo.75r.; J.N. Dalton, Statutes and Injunctions p.5

2. Statute 4:- A.H. Thompson, The Statutes of the College of....Fotheringhay, p.273.

3. PRO E 135 3/50 ff.11r., 12v.;fo.9r.:- Sint autem predicti vicarii et duo clerici maiores in plano cantu et discantu sufficienter instructi..... ; also Monasticon, vol.6 p.1419.

4. The surviving fragment of the statutes of Manchester College gets no further than saying of the college's 4 clerks that they were to be habiles in voce lectura et in cantu - PRO DL 41 2/32 m.1.

By 1423, the lay clerk was a recognised component of any liturgical choir. No important collegiate church was ever thereafter founded without a distinct team of clerks of the second form to serve in its choral forces; and at no new foundation was it ever required that any should be anything other than laymen.

#### 4.3.2. Established collegiate churches.

At least one long-established collegiate church managed to accommodate this new class of lay-clerks without any apparent difficulty. Of the four clerks of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, the statutes decreed that one should be a deacon, one a subdeacon and two in minor orders.<sup>1</sup> The payments for attendance at obits listed on the Treasurer's Accounts from 1370/71 onwards record the distinction between the various orders of clerk, and show that the statutory composition of the four clerks was generally maintained in the 1370's.<sup>2</sup> The one surviving account for the 1380's again shows the statutory pattern of deacon, subdeacon and two other clerks on 9 October 1385; however, it lists merely four clerici on 27 November and for the rest of the year 1385/6<sup>3</sup>. On this occasion, however, the explanation was simply idleness on the part of the accountant, in not bothering to continue distinguishing between the various orders of clerk, having once done so on the first entry. The attendance register shows that there was no change of personnel among the clerks during October or November 1385; so the 4 clerici of November must have included the deacon and subdeacon of October.<sup>4</sup>

However, the obit account for the next surviving year, 1393/4, again records the consistent attendance throughout the year of simply four clerici, with no attempt to distinguish their orders. This time the reason is quite evident; there was no one in the order of deacon or subdeacon - all were laymen. The vicars as a body were given an extra payment of 40s. between them that year for reading the gospel at Mass, and the clerks an extra payment of 26s. 8d. for reading the epistle<sup>5</sup>; this became the established practice, and in future years these payments were explained as being required by the lack of men in deacon's and

1. See above, p. 3010.

3. WndDC xv 34 15.

5. WndDC xv 34 16.

2. WndDC xv 34 7-14.

4. WndDC v B i ff.11,12.

subdeacon's orders.<sup>1</sup> These arrangements remained in force until the complete reorganisation of the choral staff in the 1470's.

It is clear that at some point between 1386 and 1393, it was decided that it was more important to employ laymen not in any Holy Orders as clerks of the second form, than to abide by the letter of the statutes; and this was a policy which was never reversed. At least by 1437/8, also, another inevitable corollary of this change was being appreciated. The statutory salary of a clerk not in Holy Orders, £4. p.a. (+ 6s. 8d. each for reading the epistle) was simply not enough for a professional lay clerk; so a system of supplementary payments of up to £2.13. 4d. p.a. was introduced.<sup>2</sup> This made the maximum salary payable to a clerk £7. p.a., which was by no means ungenerous.

#### 4.3.3. Household Chapels.

The household chapels of the lords spiritual and temporal most clearly demonstrate the emergence and rise of the lay clerk at this period. Unlike the staff of collegiate churches, the staff of household chapels had no chantry obligations; therefore they were by no means required to maintain a certain number of priests to say an obligatory number of daily masses, and were free to employ as high a proportion of laymen as they liked. Secondly, the composition of a household chapel was not fixed by anything so immutable as a body of statutes; its constitution was entirely free to alter as fashions altered. At any given moment, therefore, household chapels display the constitution considered by contemporaries to be best suited to the liturgical and musical needs of the time.

- 
1. e.g. Treasurer's A/c 1406/7, WndDC xv 34 24:- item vicariis collegii pro lectura evangeliorum hoc eodem anno ex rewardo pro defectu unius diaconi ad hoc constituti xl s item clericis eiusdem collegii pro lectura epistolarum hoc eodem anno pro defectu unius subdiaconi ad hoc constituti xxvj s viij d.
  2. WndDC xv 34 38\*

It has already been observed that when the constitution of the senior end of the Chapel Royal was settled at a dean and 15 gentlemen in the 1360's, it was usual for some 13 of the gentlemen to be chaplains, the remaining two being in other than priest's orders, if in orders at all. With the two yeoman-clerks, priests outnumbered laymen by 13 to 4.<sup>1</sup> Some rather tendentious calculations would indicate that a similar proportion of priests to clerks continued to be maintained into the 1380's.

At Christmas 1383, the junior departments of the active chapel staff consisted of 2 yeoman-clerks, a sub-clerk, and 4 choristers<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, there were delivered to the Dean a total of 22 surplices for himself and all the other members of the chapel:- 12 for the greater clerks (pro maioribus Clericis Capelle) and 10 for the lesser clerks and boys (pro minoribus Clericis et pueris eiusdem Capelle)<sup>3</sup>. If it be granted that a gentleman-clerk did not merit quite so voluminous a surplice as a gentleman-chaplain, then these statistics may be combined to break down the 22 members of the chapel thus:- 1 dean, and 11 gentleman-chaplains (the 12 "greater clerks"); 3 gentleman-clerks, 2 yeoman-clerks, a subclerk and 4 choristers (the 10 "lesser clerks" and boys). Of gentlemen, this gives only the dean and 14 gentlemen - one short of the standard total of 16; however, the Treasurer of the Household's account reveals that at Christmas 1383 winter livery was indeed issued to the Dean and only 14 gentlemen of the chapel.<sup>4</sup>

By 1383, therefore, no pressures for an increase in the proportion of laymen to priests within the Chapel Royal were yet being experienced. On information at present available, it is unfortunately not possible to pinpoint the exact moment at which the deliberate recruitment of lay-clerks began. It seems very likely, however, that the increase in overall numbers begun by Richard 2 in the mid 1390's was effected by recruiting only lay-clerks, and leaving the number of chaplains as it stood; equally probably much the same method of increasing the chapel was adopted by Henry 4 and Henry 5. In any event, the 27 gentlemen of the chapel in 1415 consisted of 14 chaplains and 13 lay clerks.<sup>5</sup> Of the 32 gentlemen

1. See above, pp. 3028 - 9.

2. PRO E 101 401/6 m.17.

3. ibid., mm.12,14. 10½ feet of linen was allowed for the surplice of each of the maiores clerici, 7 feet for each minor clericus.

4. PRO E 101 401/2 fo.42r.

5. PRO E 404 31/444; E.101 45/5 m.11. Twenty of these gentlemen had been among the 24 gentlemen of the chapel at Whitsun 1413; of these 20, 11 were chaplains, and 9 clerks. PRO E 101 406/21 fo.27r.



present at Queen Catherine's coronation in February 1422, 18 were priests and 14 lay-clerks.<sup>1</sup> The 2-3 yeoman-clerks remained on the staff of the chapel<sup>2</sup>, and continued to be paid at the standard yeoman's rate of 4½d. per day; the lay-clerks, however, were considered gentlemen, and were paid at the same rate as the chaplains, at 7½d. per day.<sup>3</sup>

These figures demonstrate plainly enough the effects of what was apparently a deliberate policy to improve the Chapel Royal's ability to discharge its duties by the admission of a substantial contingent of lay-clerks. The manner in which the chapel was reduced after the death of Henry 5 is even more instructive, insofar as it was the priests, rather than the clerks, who were considered to be dispensable. A baby king did not need many priests around him, and therefore many could be disposed of. On the other hand, whether the King was an adult or a child, a household chapel now needed its body of professional musicians; the services of the lay clerks, therefore, were retained. By Christmas 1425, of the 18 priests employed in 1421, only seven remained, with one fresh recruit; but of the 14 clerks, 10 remained, with two fresh recruits.<sup>4</sup> The chapel now consisted of a dean, 8 priests and 12 clerks; within a single generation the proportion of priests to lay-clerks had been almost totally reversed. This represents a policy not merely of admitting laymen to the chapel, but one of deliberately secularising the greater part of its personnel.

The Chapel Royal was thus transformed from an essentially priestly to an essentially lay organisation. This was a luxury which the choirs of cathedrals and colleges, of course, simply could not hope to emulate, given their obligations to maintain a high proportion of priests to say mass daily for the souls of founders and benefactors. Other aristocratic household chapels, however, were just as free to reflect current needs as was the Chapel Royal. The 24 gentlemen of the chapel of Thomas, Duke of Clarence, for instance, were composed of 8 priests and 16 clerks when they were listed in November 1419; Lionel Power, its most distinguished member, was one of the clerks.<sup>5</sup>

- 
1. PRO E 101 407/4 fo.36r.      2. See above, pp. 4029-30.
  3. ed. W. Ullmann, Liber Regie Capelle, p.65
  4. PRO E 101 408/1 fo.16v. legible only under ultra-violet light. This fragment formerly bore the reference E 101 406/14, and was dated 1430/1; however, fo.16r. notes the succession of Walter, Lord Hungerford by John, Lord Tiptoft as steward of the household, which occurred on 18 March 1426 - ed. F.M. Powicke, Handbook of British Chronology, (2nd.edn., London 1961) p.76.
  5. WstDC WAM 12163 fo.16v. The priests are distinguished by being given the title dom[inus].

4.3.4. The contribution of the lay clerks.

It remains to establish for certain precisely what result the church expected from this recruitment of laymen into its choral forces. The answer seems to be the sole commodity which, on reflection, could be expected from such a source, and was not sufficiently available from within the church - namely, musical expertise.

Certainly this was the commodity which the monasteries were seeking to acquire in their appointment of lay Cantors to direct their newly-founded Lady Chapel choirs - this is evident from the terms of the surviving indentures.<sup>1</sup> In the more favoured choral establishments, lay clerks were recruited as an enhancement of the priestly talent which was already there. For instance, the composers John Pyamour and Lionel Power were clerks respectively of the Chapel Royal and of the chapel of Thomas, Duke of Clarence<sup>2</sup>; but of the other known Chapel Royal composers, all were priests - Thomas Damett, John Burrell, John Cook, Nicholas Sturgeon and Robert Chirbury.<sup>3</sup>

At the college of Stoke-by-Clare, the statutes required the two maiores clerici and the 8 priest-vicars to be alike skilled in plainsong and descant.<sup>4</sup> In less favoured institutions, however, it was from the lay-clerks that musical expertise was predominantly to be sought. At St. Mary, Warwick, for instance, the principal musician was the Master of the Song School - and William Witteney, appointed in 1409, was no priest but a married layman, leasing a house just outside the college gates jointly with his wife and mother.<sup>5</sup> An inventory of February 1465 records that the college then still possessed "j Organ book bounde with bordes of Witneys yeft of parchemyn havynge a quayer of paper prikked in the begynnyng."<sup>6</sup>

1. See below, pp. 4071-2, 4090-97.

2. PRO C 66 402 m.11v., E 403 643 m.16, E 101 407/4 fo.36r; WstDC WAM 12163 fo.16v.

3. PRO E 101 45/5 m.11; 407/4 fo.21r.

4. PRO E 135 3/50 fo.9r.

5. PRO E 164 22 ff.208r., 208v.

6. PRO E 154 1/46. Against this item a later hand has marked Deficit - "it is missing". It is remotely possible that it is a fragment of this item that was bound into a printed Salisbury legend of 1488 which belonged to St. Mary, Warwick, and is now preserved as BM. Add.MS. 49597 (0). See M. Bent, "New and little known fragments" 21 Journal of the American Musicological Society (1968), p.141.

Further indications of a transformation in the nature of the contribution which the clerks of a collegiate church could make to the musical content of the services, lie in the fact that the statutes of Fotheringhay College, made c.1415, allowed in effect for either a chaplain or a clerk to act as Instructor of the Choristers.<sup>1</sup> During part of the year 1407/8 one of the clerks of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, actually did undertake this duty<sup>2</sup>, even though the statutes had allowed only for a vicar to do so. Such acknowledgment that musical knowledge and skill, enough anyway to instruct the choristers in their role in the liturgy, might be found to reside among the clerks, was a complete novelty.

The surviving archives at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, indicate that between 1395 and 1420 the organ in the chapel was being used somewhat more intensively than either before or immediately following those dates.<sup>3</sup> This involved work sufficiently demanding to require payment of a special courtesy fee to the player on certain occasions. Significantly, the men who received these payments were not vicars of the chapel, but clerks. At Christmas 1406 and again in September 1408 the payments were made to Walter Whitby, a clerk of the Chapel Royal, who was presumably temporarily present at Windsor with the royal court.<sup>4</sup> In 1415 and 1418 the payments for playing the organ were made to Laurence Dreweryn, one of the four clerks of the college.<sup>5</sup> A formal post of organist was created in 1439, and it was always one of the clerks who was appointed to it thereafter; and after the series of names of Instructors of the Choristers becomes traceable again after 1441, it transpires that (with only two brief exceptions) it was always one of the clerks who thereafter was appointed to this post also.<sup>6</sup> For what they are worth, these facts again suggest that it was an inflow of musical expertise which was expected from the chapter's decision in the early 1390's to employ lay-clerks.

---

1. Statute 3:- A.H. Thompson, The Statutes of the College of..... Fotheringhay, p.272.

2. WndDC xv 34 26:- item magistris choristarum hoc anno divisio viz domino Iohanni Kelly domino Willelmo Poungr et Thome clerico pro officiis suis dictos choristas erudiant' xxvj s. viij d.

3. See below, pp. 4064-6

4. WndDC xv 34 24, xv 56 19.

5. WndDC xv 34 28, 29, 30.

6. See below, pp. 5097-8, and Appendix B1, p. A048.

#### 4.4. The multiplication of choristers.

Among the various ways in which the Establishment's response to Lollardy manifested itself was a sudden but short-lived emphasis on the provision of a large number of choristers to attend at Divine Service. Prior to the outburst of heresy in the 1380s, even the largest choral establishments created in the 14th century had been considered adequately equipped with only a handful of chorister-boys, not exceeding six at any of St. Stephen, Westminster, St. George, Windsor, St. Mary Newarke, Leicester, Holy Trinity Arundel, or the Chapel Royal.<sup>1</sup> Six probably was just about enough, but certainly not more than enough, to discharge reasonably faithfully the functions allocated to the clerks of the bottom form in Salisbury Use.

However, such small numbers were not enough for the most ambitious founders of the 1390-1425 period. For the relatively small chapels of New College, Oxford, and St. Mary College, Winchester, William Wykham considered 16 to be the most suitable number, a number exceeding that maintained at even the best-equipped of the secular cathedrals.<sup>2</sup> For Fotheringhay College 13 choristers were supplied; while Henry 5 increased the number of choristers of the Chapel Royal from 4 (as it had been in 1409) to 9 by 1416, and to 16 by 1422.<sup>3</sup>

There seem to have been no compelling liturgical or musical reasons for this. There were no modifications to the content of the liturgy at this time, which demanded an increased minimum number of boys; nor is there any evidence to suggest that the music being composed at this period began to require the participation of a large chorus of boys' voices.<sup>4</sup> It is, in fact, difficult to see how even the liturgical plainsong could be any better served by 16 boys than by 6; the customaries laid down the number of boys to take part in small-group sections of the chant, and the only difference which a chorus of 16 boys could make over a chorus of 6, in chants deputed to be sung by omnes, would be one of volume.

Indeed, the need to maximise the number of choristers was by no means universally felt. The smaller of the major colleges founded at this time were considered able to get by with only six choristers each;<sup>5</sup>

1. See above, pp. 3003-5 *passim*; p. 3010, n. 5; 3028-9

2. At both Salisbury and Exeter Cathedrals there were 14 choristers; see above p. 2012, 2013.

3. See above, pp. 4019, 4030.

4. This question is discussed more fully below, pp. 6003-11.

5. See above, p. 4011; only 5 choristers were provided for at Stoke-by-Clare.

while four was enough for the household chapel of Thomas, duke of Clarence<sup>1</sup>, which in other respects does not seem to have lacked for anything it needed. At none of the old-established cathedrals and colleges, mostly equipped with only 6-10 choristers, was any attempt made at all to increase their complement of boys to keep in line with the fashion. And whatever <sup>may have been the motives</sup> ~~motives were~~ inspiring Henry 5 to increase the choristers of the Chapel Royal to 16, <sup>they</sup> were not evident to the Regency Council, who within a few months of Henry's death had chopped the number of boys back to 6 again.<sup>2</sup>

Probably, therefore, the reasons for the sporadic enlargement in the number of boys considered necessary for a liturgical choir, as best constituted to do its job, lie purely in the generally exceptional character of the period. As has been shown, the role of the boys of the choir in the performance of the liturgy was, at this period, more decorative than musical.<sup>3</sup> Into their role in the Opus Dei was distilled a high proportion of those of its features which the Lollards most vehemently attacked, since the boys contributed mainly to its pure ceremony. If, in retaliation, the Establishment wished to emphasise the ceremonial aspect of divine service, then an expansion in the number of choristers was one of the best ways of achieving it. So equipped, the chapels of Winchester College and New College were able regularly to provide the scholars of the colleges with the edifying spectacle of Mass and the Office celebrated with all the splendour for the which the liturgy called. Similar motives, mixed of sheer ostentation and a desire to confound Lollardy, would equally explain the multiplication of choristers at the Chapel Royal and Fotheringhay.

It may be noted in passing, however, that at Wykham's two academic colleges, the provision of a large number of chorister-boys also enhanced the educational usefulness of each college. Alongside the body of actual scholars, there was provided a further team of boys who, once they had learnt the basic arts of choristering, could also be admitted to the benefits of a grammar education.<sup>4</sup> Once the fad for

1. WstDC WAM 12163 ff.16v., 17r., 19v.

2. See above, p. 4032.

3. See above, p. 2030

4. Certainly at Winchester, which had its own grammar master and usher for the scholars; it has been calculated that during the 15th century, out of any year's 16 choristers, 10 or more were likely to become scholars of the College:- A.F. Leach, "Winchester College" in VCH Hampshire, vol.2 pp.270-1, Facilities for being taught grammar were by no means lacking in Oxford either.

multiplying choristers had died away elsewhere, after c.1425, the only large-scale choral establishments ever again equipped with so many choristers were just the educational secular colleges:- Eton College, King's College Cambridge, Magdalen College Oxford and Cardinal College Oxford, all with 16 choristers.<sup>1</sup> After c.1425 mere liturgical extravagance was no longer seen to be a factor worth such disproportionate cultivation; it is difficult to conclude otherwise, therefore, than that in these cases the excessive number of choristers was retained because it enhanced the educational usefulness of each college.

In the monasteries, the creation at this period of boys' choirs where there had been none at all before, certainly seems to have filled a devotional need of some permanence, and these Lady Chapel choirs continued to flourish.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, the fad for multiplying choirboys was of only brief duration; engendered as a response to the Lollard attack on the ceremony of the liturgy, it did not outlive the general return to more sober reactions in the 1420's.<sup>3</sup> Never again, for instance, would the Chapel Royal have so many as 16 choristers; for the rest of the 15th century, 10 or 12 was the considered maximum. Except for the academic colleges referred to above, where extraneous motives continued to operate, similar numbers were also preferred for the best-endowed of the colleges founded subsequently in the 15th century. And by 1426, it was possible again for a well-endowed college to be established without any provision for choristers at all.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. J. Heywood and T. Wright, The Ancient Laws... pp.121, 478; Queen's Commissioners, Statutes of the Colleges of Oxford vol.2, p.6; MMB, pp.36-7.
  2. See below, pp. 4085-4100.
  3. K.B. Macfarlane, John Wycliffe, p.166; the 1420's were a period of successful mopping up of all the more influential elements among the here-tics, leaving established society very little to fear from Lollardy.
  4. Hemingborough, Yorkshire:- See J. Solloway in VCH Yorkshire vol.3, p.359.

#### 4.5. Musical priorities and innovations.

##### 4.5.1. The influence of patrons.

There are numerous indications other than those already considered which suggest that a much increased interest in the cultivation of the music of the liturgy was being taken in this 1390-1425 period. In the first place, founders and patrons of liturgical choirs are occasionally shown as themselves intervening in the interests of the music they wished to promote. In 1412, for instance, Thomas Duke of Clarence borrowed one of the finest known copies of the works of Guillaume de Machaut from its owner, Jean duc de Berry; he returned it in 1416.<sup>1</sup> The statutes of Fotheringhay College record that Edward Duke of York, its principal founder, desired particularly to see that the choristers of the college were properly taught both in Latin grammar and in the liturgical chant.<sup>2</sup> Possibly the same influence explains the unusually detailed provision made for the chorister-boys throughout this particular code of statutes, and for the high order of esteem in which those best able to contribute to the music of the liturgy were to be held in the College.

It has been noted that Henry 4 instituted important reforms in the constitution of the Chapel Royal, apparently designed to enhance the opportunities afforded to its members to concentrate their attention on just their essential duty of accompanying the King's daily devotions.<sup>3</sup> A contemporary chronicler described Henry as in musica micans, et mirabilis litterature, et maxime in morali<sup>4</sup>, and it

- 
1. Bibliothèque National MS fr. 9221; I am grateful to Prof. Brian Trowell for this piece of information.
  2. Statute 3:- A.H. Thompson, The Statutes of the College of..Fotheringhay, p.272
  3. Above, pp. 4026-8.
  4. First reported by Prof. Harrison, MMB, p.221; full context quoted by M. Bent, "Sources of the Old Hall Music," 94 Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association (1967/8) p.33. Issue must be taken with Dr. Bent's dismissal of this passage as mere conventional flattery. The crucial words are really far from conventional; rather they are most unexpected. A conventional adulatory passage of any king of c.1400 would proclaim his military prowess, his justice, his open-handedness and his piety - a King was judged by his aptitude as a war-lord, as a maintainer of internal peace and justice, as a generous employer, and as a Christian. Praise of a King's intellectual qualities in music, literature and philosophy is so unexpected that its application in this case rings absolutely true. Only one factor could have caused it to occur to any chronicler to make such claims - the fact that they were true. Granted that Strecche was writing an adulatory passage, he may well have exaggerated; but the facts he exaggerated were still facts, Henry's skill in music being one of them. The kind of education which Henry 4 provided for his children tends to confirm the importance he attached to academic and bookish pursuits - K.B. Macfarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England, pp.43, 243-4. Mrs. Bent's suggestion that micans in musica may mean no more than acquaintance with the theoretical treatises of

is plausible that his reorganisation of the Chapel Royal reflected a genuine concern to promote in his chapel a milieu in which the composition and performance of liturgical music could flourish. It seems that Henry himself was acquainted with the plainsong of the liturgy to a degree far exceeding that normally achieved by any layman, insofar as he owned his own Breviary<sup>1</sup>. Normally a Book of Hours was all that a layman needed for his private devotions; but Henry apparently knew his way around the liturgy sufficiently well not merely to attend chapel and hear the Office, but actually to follow it in his own service-books. Henry 4 does himself remain the most likely candidate for identification with the composer Roy Henry, who contributed a Gloria and a Sanctus to the Old Hall Manuscript.<sup>2</sup>

4.5.2. Musical competence in the order of priorities.

In certain other respects also, founders and those responsible for the conduct of the music of the liturgy displayed unusual concern for its seemly performance. In January 1394 Dean Montague of Salisbury Cathedral summoned all the vicars to appear before the chapter, and rebuked them for allowing the singing to go flat, and the succentor for being remiss in failing to reprove them.<sup>3</sup> The statutes of Fotheringhay College demanded no particular musical skills on the part of the master and 12 chaplains, beyond the standard requirements that they have 'good and suitable voices', and be 'adequately knowledgeable in reading and singing'<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, in hall the more dignified places at meals were to go, not by seniority as was usual elsewhere, but to those chaplains who were the better lettered, and knowledgeable and skilled in chant.<sup>5</sup> Further, it was directed that the precentor entable

Fn.4, p.4054 cont'd.

Boethius does not seem very plausible, either. Boethius was schoolmen's stuff, ignored by practical musicians; and even as a constituent part of the schoolmen's Quadrivium it had ceased to be taken seriously long before the 15th century:- CFA.Williams, ...Decrees in Music...pp.30,34.

1. Account of Keeper of Great Wardrobe, 1408/9:- PRO E 101 405/22 fo.18r.:- et pro garnitura ij Baggs de coreo tannato pro portifero domini Regis infra portando prec' pec' vj s - xij s.
2. BM Add.MS.57950;nos.16 and 94 in ed.M.Bent and A.Hughes,The Old Hall Manuscript, 46 Corpus Musicae Mensurabilis (1969). The only other plausible candidate is Henry 5. Despite being father and son, on the broader time-scale the two are very nearly contemporaries:- only 20 years separate their dates of birth (3 April 1367, 9 August 1387), and less than 10 years their deaths (21 March 1413,1 September 1422).
3. SDC Reg.Dunham fo.130r.:-...in frequentando chorum et ecclesiam ac in psalmodia et cantu et precipue in depressione cantus in choro culpabiles fuerunt, et quod in parte succentor nimis remissus erat in arguendo ipsos vicerios in ea parte.
4. Statute 1:-A.H.Thompson, The Statutes of the College of..Fotheringhay,p.270
5. Statute 9:- ibid:- pp.280-1.



as celebrants at the four daily masses those chaplains "who may best be freed from the choir and from the singing"<sup>1</sup>. This extraordinary direction apparently implies that those with the worst voices were to be selected to celebrate, so that the singing of the choral plainsong should sound the better - a very significant order of priorities.

#### 4.5.3. The contribution of the choristers.

The growing importance being placed on the purely ceremonial aspects of worship caused not only the very considerable increase, already noted, in the number of choristers which a liturgical choir was considered (in some quarters) to need; it also provoked the compilers of statutes to enter into much more detail than previously concerning the recruitment and training of the choristers. The preamble to the statutes of Manchester College gave a clear account of the type of boy from which its choristers were to be recruited:- 'small boys of integrity, capable in voice, knowing plain song at least, who are fit for the learning of chant, and similarly teachable in good behaviour, having consideration for their age, and for what can be expected of those in their position'<sup>2</sup>. At Fotheringhay, the recruitment of musically competent boys was particularly carefully legislated for. Able and suitable boys of tender years, knowing only elementary plainsong, could be admitted up to the age of nine; boys of middling years (mediocris etatis), fully instructed in the chant, were to be admitted up to the age of 12.<sup>3</sup>

Greater importance given to the presence of boys at service in choir necessarily involved greater importance given to the job of instructing them. It seems that this was not yet apparent to those who compiled the final draft of the statutes of Winchester College, dated 1400. They followed in the tradition of the compilers of the statutes of e.g. St. Mary Newarke, Leicester<sup>4</sup>, and considered the work of instructing the choristers to be of too little significance and consequence to be worth legislating for at all; despite the great length of the code they produced, it contains not a single reference to any Instructor of the Choristers.

- 
1. Statute 49, ibid, p.299:- 'qui melius possunt vacare a choro et cantu'.
  2. parvulos honestos in voce habiles ad minus planum cantum scientes qui doctrine cantus sunt capaces ac moribus docibiles conscimiliter iuxta etatem et gradus sui decenciam - PRO DL 41 2/32 m l.
  3. Statute 3, A.H. Thompson, The Statutes of the College of..Fotheringhay, p.272
  4. See above, p. 3015.

Such a concept was already out of date, and the warden and fellows did not share the lawyers' indifference to the choristers' contribution to the performance of the liturgy. The chapel was consecrated for use on 17 July 1395<sup>1</sup>; by Michaelmas there was a full complement of 16 choristers, and salaries began to be paid to members of the chapel staff as Instructors of the Choristers from that point on.<sup>2</sup>

From 1400 onwards, however, no code of statutes yet examined for any new collegiate church large enough to include choristers failed to make detailed provision for their instruction in singing, and usually also in grammar.<sup>3</sup> Not infrequently the salary offered for this job was considerably in excess of the 26s. 8d. p.a. considered adequate for the Instructor at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in 1352.<sup>4</sup> At Fotheringhay, the master of the college was to see to the selection of one of the chaplains to teach the choristers in grammar, at an extra salary of 26s. 8d. p.a., and of some other member of the college to act as their instructor in chant. If this was one of the priests, the salary was 40s. p.a.; if otherwise - i.e. , one of the clerks- the salary was to be decided by the Master of the College<sup>5</sup>. At Stoke-by-Clare college, the content of the boys' education was listed with precision:- it was to comprehend reading and writing, plainsong, and the technique of improvising a line of polyphony over a given plainsong known as 'descant'; the master's annual salary was 40s.<sup>6</sup>

This new awareness of the contribution which boys could make to the pure ceremony of worship resulted in their employment at services which previously had not usually been sung by boys' voices at all. This at any rate would seem to be the reason for a sudden marked preference for having votive devotions to the Virgin Mary sung by boys' voices. The daily singing of a votive mass of the Virgin was by this time a universal practice in all major churches. At old-established institutions, such as the cathedrals

1. A.F. Leach, A History of Winchester College, p.134

2. ibid., p.137; T.F. Kirby, Annals of Winchester College, pp.140,146; MMB, p.32. The Winchester College code of Statutes was essentially a legal not a practical document; its emphasis was laid on the methods to be used to secure the exaction of faithful and efficient service to the college from its members and servants, quite without going into any otiose definitions of exactly what such service was to consist of - that was left to the assumptions of common knowledge. The statutes have little or nothing to say, therefore, about the practical routine details of either the working of the college, or of the services in chapel.

3. To this general rule, King's College, Cambridge, is an inexplicable exception. See below, p. 5086.

4. See above. p. 3014.

5. Statute 3:- A.H.Thompson, The Statutes of the College of Fotheringhay, pp.272-3

6. 'in lectura scriptura plano cantu et discantu ac aliis bonis moribus et honestis' - PRO E 135 3/50 fo.11v.

of Salisbury and Wells, and St. George's Chapel, Windsor, it was sung by the vicars-choral, and boys' voices were not used.<sup>1</sup> At Fotheringhay, however, it was directed that each day Lady Mass was to be sung in the Lady Chapel of the collegiate church by the choristers, without men's voices (except of course for the celebrant)<sup>2</sup>. This practice was exactly parallel to the contemporary creation, by the greater monasteries, of Lady Chapel choirs of boys' voices to sing Lady Mass each day<sup>3</sup>; at colleges founded subsequently in the 15th century, the singing of Lady Mass by the boys became a common observance.

There was further expansion in the use made of the choristers in the performance of the liturgy at this time. Boys' voices were widely employed in the growing observance of the daily votive antiphons, dealt with below. Also a practice was beginning to develop of observing the daily Hours of the Virgin alongside the ordinary Canonical Hours. Normally these were said in secular practice, not sung, and as their observance spread during the 15th century, their performance was commonly deputed to the choristers. As an early example of this the choristers of Stoke-by-Clare were required to recite Matins and Vespers of the Virgin in choir each day, while the bells were being rung for, respectively, Matins and Vespers of the day, which followed immediately after.<sup>4</sup>

Very probably, therefore, the quantity of the contribution made by the choristers to the conduct of the divine service was actually increasing at this time. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that the nature of their contribution underwent any significant alteration. Neither the music, nor the devotional practices of the period, were requiring of the

1. See above, pp. 2027-9, 3008. Lady Mass was sung daily at Winchester College, but the statutes give no precise indication as to its manner of performance:- Statute 29, T.F. Kirby, Annals of Winchester College, pp.503,504.

2. Statute 46:- A.H.Thompson, Statutes of the college of....Fotheringhay, p.296. At least from the early 14th century, daily Lady Mass had been sung by boys' voices at St. Mary, Warwick:- see above pp. 4016-7.

3. See below, pp. 4085-6, 4089-4100.

4. PRO E 135 3/50 fo.12v.

boys the mastery of any new techniques<sup>1</sup>. They continued to contribute what they had always done:- singing plainsong, reciting prayers, reading lessons, and - in the more adventurous institutions - singing some descant; in the campaign against the values of the Lollards, however, they were now being asked to do more of it. In the long run, this greater prominence given to boys' voices - only just beginning to make itself felt in this 1390-1425 period - was to have important consequences.

#### 4.5.4. The cultivation of the votive antiphon.

One small but characteristic feature of the medieval liturgies was the memorial, a miniature service added to the end of lauds and vespers, consisting of an antiphon without psalm, followed by versicle, response and collect. The memorial was an act of devotion to some particular saint, and the texts were votive in character. They were strictly part of the liturgy, and their content was specified exactly by the service-books.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, from the 13th century onwards, there began at various churches the observance of miniature services similar in form and content to the memorial, but performed for the benefit of the soul of the founder or of some benefactor of the church. These services were not liturgical, and their content was in fact concocted by the benefactor himself; the precise form of each therefore was not to be found in any service-book, but was specified in the statutes or chapter acts. The benefactor granted or bequeathed money or property to the particular church or college, and in return the choral staff performed the 'memorial' as he required. The antiphon was votive in character,

---

1. Even the statutory requirement at Stoke-by-Clare college that the boys be taught descant (above, p.4057 and n.6) was by no means unprecedented - cf. the 13th century Lincoln Cathedral customary and the statutes of Ottery St. Mary College, 1339, dealt with above, pp. 2039, 2066.

2. MMB, pp.76-7

addressed to some saint to whom the benefactor was particularly devoted; Kyrie eleison and prayers for the welfare of his soul followed, and the psalm De profundis was sung. The service therefore was essentially intercessory in nature - a plea to the saint to whom it was addressed, to intercede on behalf of the soul of the deceased benefactor.

Liturgical memorials were performed in choir, and so too were some of those endowed by benefactors. For these latter, however, it became increasingly common for the founder to ask the singers to gather not in the choir-stalls, but at his tomb, or in a chapel or at an altar of image dedicated to the saint to whom this act of devotion was addressed. There its opening item, the sung votive antiphon actually addressed to the saint, whose image was the focal point of the action, naturally acquired particular significance and attention. And at a period when the theology of the day was encouraging sinners to approach the saints as intercessors on their behalf at the court of the stern Judge who otherwise would damn their souls to the hell they deserved, these brief services, with their intercessory nature, seem to have generated a particular appeal to the singers who performed them.

As the Holy Mother of God, the Virgin Mary was potentially the most effective intercessor of all. The great majority of these votive services, therefore, were addressed to her, and performed before a prominent image of the Virgin either somewhere in the church or in the Lady Chapel. It was in fact common for any appropriate devotional text to be substituted for the votive psalm-antiphon as the opening item of the service; nevertheless, all the texts used in this manner, whatever their origin, continued to be referred to in this context as 'antiphons'<sup>1</sup>. By the end of the 15th century, these votive 'antiphons' to the Virgin Mary, referred to for convenience as Marian Antiphons, were drawing from members of liturgical choirs the creation of some of the finest polyphonic music being composed at that time.

The singing of these votive antiphons to the virgin, to their proper plainsong music at first, had a long history. As early as c.1236 Roger the Chaplain, a canon of Wells, granted a house to the cathedral for the use of the cathedral grammar school master and his scholars. In return, the school master was to pay for an annual obit

---

1. It was as used in this sense that the word 'antiphon' became corrupted into the English "anthem", now denoting any musical setting of a non-liturgical religious or devotional text for use in church.

for Roger after his death, and each Wednesday and Friday was to have his scholars sing an antiphon in honour of the Blessed Virgin.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after 1273 (the date of the death of bishop William Button 2, nephew of the benefactor), it was provided by the executors of the will of the late John de Button, canon of Wells, that the prior and canons of Barlynch should pay annually to the chapter of Wells the sum of 25 marks. This was to be spent partly to support a chantry of four chaplains celebrating daily for the soul of the late canon John de Button; and partly on paying 20s. p.a. to five choristers singing daily an antiphon of BMV before her image set up in the nave of the church on the north side of the choir screen near its entrance.<sup>2</sup> This ritual continued to be observed well into the 16th century, and probably until the abolition of votive antiphons in 1548.<sup>3</sup>

The singing of an evening Marian antiphon by boys' voices was introduced at Salisbury cathedral by bishop John Waltham in 1395. In consideration of the meritorious benefits which he had conferred on the choristers (and of which nothing is known), it was agreed between the bishop, the chapter and the boys themselves that every day thenceforth, immediately after compline had been sung in the choir, and before the singing of the De profundis, all the choristers of the church should assemble before the high altar<sup>4</sup>, and there kneeling should, for the good estate and as a memorial of bishop Waltham, sing aloud the Marian antiphon Sancta Maria virgo intercede, with the versicle ora pro nobis sancta dei genetrix and the prayer In omni tribulacione et angustia, following which all should say a Pater noster and Ave Maria.<sup>5</sup> This ritual continued to be observed at least until 1540/1, but by then the Jesus antiphon Sancte Deus had been substituted for Sancta Maria virgo intercede; it was sung before the great crucifix in the nave of the church.<sup>6</sup>

- 
1. WlsDC charter without reference (found in the Cathedral Muniment Room, in the topmost of four small drawers near the window); copy in Liber Albus I fo.33v.
  2. WlsDC Liber Albus I fo.22v.
  3. The payment appears in the Barlynch section of every Communar's A/c down to 1547/8. See also MMB, p.426, and VE vol.1, p.127.
  4. The high altar at Salisbury was dedicated to BVM, that being the dedication of the cathedral church as a whole.
  5. SDC, Charter without reference, in box marked 'Vicars Choral'; Reg. Holmes fo.3v. There is a setting for four voices of Sancta Maria virgo intercede by Thomas Knight (instructor of the choristers 1529-1543) in BM Add. MSS 17802-5.
  6. SDC, Accounts of Collector of Choristers' Rents, 1529/30 and 1540/1. Waltham had endowed this antiphon with property granted to the prior and brethren of the monastery of Edington, Wiltshire.

On 8 December 1388, at the festivities following the enthronement of John Waltham as bishop, he had had the vicars of the cathedral stand before him after grace had been said after the meal, to sing solempniter the Marian antiphon Ave Regina celorum<sup>1</sup>. Possibly the singing of this antiphon daily in the cathedral by the choristers had become a routine custom by 1409, since it is casually mentioned in such a context in a will of that year<sup>2</sup>; however, no further reference has been found. Another custom of Salisbury Cathedral was directed to be observed at Fotheringhay College in its statutes of c.1415. As the final item of each day's work, the bells were to be rung at 7 p.m. in winter, and 8 p.m. in summer, to warn all members of the college of the imminent closing of the gate of the close for the night; meanwhile the choristers gathered in the Lady Chapel (at the west end of the church at Fotheringhay), and as soon as the bell stopped ringing, sang the Marian antiphon Salve Regina 'as it is accustomed to be done in the cathedral church of Salisbury'<sup>3</sup>. However, if this was accurate in c.1415, certainly the custom was not long continued at Salisbury. In 1454 complaint was made at a visitation that the antiphon called 'Le Salve', which had formerly been sung in the Lady Chapel, had been discontinued and ought to be restored. To which, however, reply was made that an investigation no member of the cathedral staff recalled that he had ever heard that antiphon sung, nor did anyone know how it was endowed, nor how it ought to be sung.<sup>4</sup>

Numerous other examples of the performance of votive antiphons have been collected by Dr. Harrison<sup>5</sup>; they, and these others just quoted, illustrate the broad variety of contexts in which the votive antiphon could be sung, while all the time retaining the basic pattern of a brief, self-contained service of which the antiphon was the principal feature. The 20-odd years following 1400 seem to have constituted a period when many such antiphons might be sung in the same church each day. At Fotheringhay they totalled nine. At the end of compline, all members

1. SDC Reg. Dunham fo.42r.

2. SBR Reg. Dean Chandler fo.31r:- will of Richard Anturbus, vicar choral, made 11 Apr.1409. He bequeathed 3s.4d. to the choristers 'ut dicant pro anima mea et animabus omnium fidelium defunctorum psalmum de profundis circa sepulcrum meum immediate post Ave regina infra trigintale meum.

3. Statutes 41,42:- A.H.Thompson, The Statutes of the College of... Fotheringhay, p.295.

4. SDC Reg. Burgh fo.49r.

5. MMB pp.81-8

of the choir present at the service remained in their stalls to sing an antiphon of St. John Baptist (Inter natos) and then an antiphon of St. Edward (Ave rex Edwarde), each with versicle and prayers. Then all went to the step of the high altar, and knelt to sing an antiphon of the virgin suitable to the time of year, after which one of the choristers recited the Ave Maria. The chaplains and clerks then departed for dinner. The choristers meanwhile sang De profundis at the tomb of the founder, Edward, Duke of York, and then gathered round an image of the Virgin in the nave of the church to sing the Marian antiphon Benedicta with versicle and prayer. They then assembled successively at the altars of St. Michael and St. Thomas Becket, at each singing an antiphon (Opem nobis at the latter) with versicle and prayer; then the boys too decamped for dinner.<sup>1</sup> After the grace following lunch and dinner each day in hall, all the college sang the Marian antiphon Sancta Maria [virgo intercede]<sup>2</sup>. Finally, the choristers sang Salve Regina each evening in church as the curfew was rung.<sup>3</sup>

Stoke-by-Clare College, with 4 antiphons per day was not quite so extravagant. These included the singing, immediately following compline, of antiphons of St. John Baptist, the Holy Trinity and the Virgin Mary, each with versicle and prayer, by all who had been present at vespers and compline. The same forces then assembled in the Lady Chapel to sing Salve Regina with the trope always associated with it in English usage; this was observed at the instance of Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln (1420-31).<sup>4</sup> Votive antiphons were also observed by the choirs of household chapels. For instance the gentlemen and yeomen-clerks and boys of Richard 2's chapel royal sang Inter natos, an antiphon of the King's patron saint, St. John Baptist, each day after vespers, at least during the 1380's.<sup>5</sup>

This notable prodigality in the singing of votive antiphons was partly symptomatic of that general desire to maximise the embellishment of the liturgy, which characterised the years in which religious society was reacting most vigorously to the challenge presented by the Lollards.

- 
1. Statute 37:- A.H. Thompson, The Statutes of the College of... Fotheringhay, pp.292-3.
  2. Statute 40:- ibid., p.294.
  3. Statutes 41,42:- ibid., p.295
  4. PRO E 135 3/50 fo.13r.
  5. PRO E 101 401/6 mm.24,25; 401/16 mm.23,26.



After the panic died down, a due sense of proportion was restored. The performance of this very characteristic act of devotion to a saintly intercessor was seen to fill a certain spiritual need, and therefore did not lapse completely. It was henceforth the normal practice for any founder of a collegiate church to require the daily observance of a devotion of this sort - but not normally more than one. Most commonly this was addressed to the Virgin, but after c.1460 could also be addressed to Jesus. At Salisbury Cathedral, for instance, it has been seen that in the second decade of the 15th century, three Marian antiphons were being sung daily; but the two of these that were unendowed were quickly allowed to lapse, leaving just bishop Waltham's Sancta Maria. The legacy of this period in the history of the votive antiphon, however, was permanent; until 1548 it remained a standard part of the devotional practice of its day. Prior to c.1400 it had been possible for a founder to create an institution with a substantial choral force, without considering it desirable to require the singing of votive antiphons to the saints at all - e.g. St. George's, Windsor, and Winchester College. After c.1425 provision for the singing of generally one votive antiphon daily became a standard requirement, and colleges founded before c.1400 commonly did adopt the practice in the course of time - at New College, Oxford in the 1440's for instance, and at St. George's, Windsor, in the 1460's.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.5.5. The use of the organs.<sup>2</sup>

There is some slender evidence to indicate that at this period members of liturgical choirs were rather more frequently occupied in playing the organ at service in choir, than either had been the case previously, or was to be immediately after. As a corollary, cathedral and collegiate chapters, who were responsible for the manner in which divine service was performed, found themselves footing bills for the maintenance and repair of the organ with temporarily increased frequency.

---

1. See below, pp. 5083-4.

2. It may be said here that in the course of well over three years research for material for this thesis, not a single shred of evidence came to light to suggest that at any time between 1340 and 1542 was any musical instrument other than the organ ever used in the course of any liturgical or devotional service held in the quire or Lady Chapel of any English church. My own research therefore fully bears out the conclusion expressed by Prof. Harrison in MIB, p.xiv.

St. George's, Windsor, is a case in point. The statutes of 1352 mentioned neither organ nor organ-player, and indeed, the college archives appear to contain no mention of an organ at all until some minor repair was effected on the then existing instrument in January 1395, and again, more substantially, in 1397. Further minor repair was carried out in January 1414<sup>1</sup>; and when in April 1416 the precentor sent to London for two men to come and repair the organ, the work done must have been so substantial that he finished up by paying them 40s. for work which could be described as 'for making an organ'<sup>2</sup>. Possibly their employment really was for making a new organ; for in March 1420 repairs were carried out to 'the old organ'<sup>3</sup>. After these bursts of activity, however, no mention of either instrument can be found in any of the six remaining precentor's accounts dating from 1420 to 1458, after which there is a gap until 1511.

It would appear, then, that between 1395 and 1420 the amount of repairs put in on the St. George's Chapel organs might suggest that it was then being used somewhat more intensively than either before or immediately after - a conclusion wholly consistent with the general tendency of the period toward the enhancement of divine service by all means available. The treasurer's accounts furnish further corroborative evidence, in that it is exactly at this period that there occurred certain occasions when playing the organ actually involved work sufficiently demanding to require the payment of a special courtesy fee to the player. On routine occasions - probably festivals only - playing the organ appears to have been the unpaid duty of some member of the chapel choral staff. That is, a particular member would discharge his normal duty of attendance at service by playing the organ instead of (or as well as) singing in choir, and so not merit any special reward. In the early years of the 15th century, however, the need to enhance divine service involved special work on the part of the organ-player on certain particular festivals, to an extent that was seen to deserve actual financial recognition.

---

1. Precentor's A/Cs:- WndDC xv 56 14,15,21.

2. reduced to 26s. 8d. by the chapter; WndDC xv 56 22 and A.K.B.Roberts, St. George's Chapel, p.98

3. WndDC xv 56 25.

All these payments fall in the brief period 1403-18. In 1403 an organ-player (here the most plausible translation of the word organista) was paid 13s. 4d. for playing on one occasion (probably Easter) and 3s. 4d. for the feasts of the Assumption and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.<sup>1</sup> In 1406/7 Walter Whitby, who was a clerk of the Chapel Royal and presumably was temporarily resident in Windsor with the royal court, was paid 13s. 4d. as a gratuity for playing the organ for the college's services in chapel at Christmas 1406<sup>2</sup>, and a further 3s. 4d. in September 1408<sup>3</sup>. In 1415 Laurence Dreweryn, one of the clerks of the college, was given a courtesy payment of 5s. for playing the organ during the term ending at Christmas, and a further 5s. in 1418.<sup>4</sup>

These payments are of a sporadic nature and are clearly related to particularly demanding work at just certain festive times of the year:- Christmas, Easter, and the great Marian festivals. To such occasions can be added certain grand state occasions which took place in St. George's. Dr. Fellowes noted that in 1416 the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund came to Windsor, "and on 7 May 1416 he was installed a Knight of the Garter with great ceremony in St. George's Chapel".<sup>5</sup> It seems very probable that the major work done on the chapel organ the previous month was put in hand in anticipation of this event.

Such special use of the organ appears not to have been persevered with after c.1420. Although a good number of Treasurer's Accounts survive for the 20 years following 1418, no similar payments to any organ player are to be found in them until the appointment of a regular organist began in 1439.

- 
1. WndDC xv 34 22(i), Treasurer's A/c 1 Feb.-1 Oct.1403:-  
Dona et placita ..... item organiste prima vice xiiij<sup>s</sup> iiiij<sup>d</sup> per Mass[ingham, canon resident] et altera pro festis Assumpcionis et Nativitatis beate marie iijs iiiijd. per thesaurarium - xvjs viijd.
  2. WndDC xv 34 24: Item Waltero Whitby clerico existenti ibidem tempore Natalis domini ad instanciam Custodis pro divinis in Organis exequendis ex rewardo xiiij s iiiij d. The use of the phrase 'clericus existens ibidem' instead of 'clericus collegii' makes it quite plain that Whitby was a visiting musician, and not a clerk of the college as Dr.Fellowes (Organists and Masters of the Choristers, pp.4-5 and plate facing p.4) and Dr.Roberts (St.George's Chapel, p.105) took him to be.
  3. WndDC xv 56 19 - et Waltero Whitby pro organisterio iijs iiiijd.
  4. WndDC xv 34 28-30.
  5. E.H. Fellowes, Organists and Masters of the Choristers, p.6.

There is evidence to suggest that at Wells Cathedral also some belated concern was shown to ensure that divine service in the cathedral continued to be enhanced by the playing of the organs. In general, Wells Cathedral appears not to have adopted the system common in other churches, whereby the organ-player's job was considered as one that could be discharged by any one of the choral staff competent to do it, without special remuneration. Rather, there was usually just one man specifically appointed as custos organorum, and thus the acknowledged cathedral organist. All the early Communar's Accounts down to 1400/01 record the payment to him of his salary, unfortunately without ever mentioning his name.<sup>1</sup> Then, in 1407/8, 1408/9 and 1414/15 no such payments are recorded, indicating that the playing of the organ in the cathedral may temporarily have been discontinued.

In the latter year, however, a substantial overhaul of the cathedral's organs was begun. In 1414/15 John of Gloucester, organ builder, was paid 6s. 8d. in part payment of the cost of one small organ - most probably for the Lady Chapel behind the high altar - and a further regardum of 13s. 4d. in 1416/7. In 1417/18 he completed work on the great organ in the choir, for which he was paid 33s. 4d. in cash, and allowed to take away the old instrument in the Lady Chapel in part payment.<sup>2</sup> With these operations under way, the payment of the annual stipendium to the vicar-choral serving as organist was resumed on the account for 1416/7, and continued to appear on every surviving account thereafter.

No very strong case can be built on evidence which relates to only two institutions, and is anyway partly negative in character. There is a *prima facie* case, however, for considering that among the many devices adopted in the period c.1395-c.1425 for enhancing the ceremonial of divine worship, conscious use was made of the playing of the organ during services in choir, on the greater festal occasions at least.

1. WlsDC, Communar's A/cs 1343/4 onwards, Biddisham account.

2. WlsDC, Communar's A/cs 1414/5:- item solut' Johanni Organiste de Glawcestr' in partem solucionem j parvi Organ' per Senescallum vj s. viijd. 1416/7:- Item in rewarde facto Johanni de Gloucest' factori Organorum xiijs. iiijd. 1417/18:- Item solut' Johanni Organiste de Glaucestr' pro magnis Organis in Choro camsis cum Organis in Capella Beate Marie xxxiiij s. iiiij d. The word organista is used consistently in the Wells archive to denote 'organ-builder'; the word camsus, meaning 'exchanged', was regularly used by the compiler of these accounts to indicate when a payment was being made for supply of a new item replacing an old one taken away in part exchange.

#### 4.6. The response at the monasteries.

Amongst the religious institutions to respond to the urge to make greater provision for the embellishment of the Opus Dei were the monasteries. This was achieved not by placing any fresh burdens on, or expecting any new skills of, the monks themselves. Except in a few instances, which will be investigated, it would appear that the impetus to be at the forefront of any new religious venture or fashion, and to set the pace of innovation in all aspects of religious life, had long deserted the monks by the end of the 14th century. No longer participants, they adopted the role of patrons. The greater monasteries proved able to devote some of their extensive material resources to registering a willingness to share in one important part of the contemporary concern for enhancing the performance of divine service - the adoration of the Virgin Mary. They began to establish small choirs of lay personnel to sing votive services to the Virgin - especially the daily Lady Mass - in the Lady Chapels with which by c.1400 all the greater churches were equipped, away from the monks' choir where the monastic liturgy was performed.

##### 4.6.1. The monks' choirs.

It is exceptionally difficult to assess the state of the cultivation of liturgical music at the monasteries at any date after c.1350. However, it seems clear that the various kinds of evidence which favour the conclusion that until about 1350 the monasteries had taken the lead in, e.g. the composition of polyphonic music, vanishes almost entirely in the second half of the 14th century, and does not reappear; and this fact can hardly be without significance. For instance, prior to c.1350, all the English composers whose names are known, were monks. However, of the very fair proportion of composers for whom biographical information is available from c.1370 onwards, no more than one or two are known to have been members of religious orders; rather, the huge majority were seculars employed by colleges, household chapels and secular cathedrals. All surviving fragments of musical manuscripts dating from earlier than c.1370, and to which a likely provenance can be applied, turn out to have originated at monasteries. From the abbey of Bury St. Edmunds, for example, fragments from no less than six manuscripts of polyphonic music are known to survive; all of

them, however, are dateable to periods earlier than c.1360.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, from the years following c.1380, there survives hardly a single manuscript of polyphonic music, or fragment of one, which can be shown with any likelihood to have been compiled for, or been used in, the monks' choir of any monastic institution.<sup>2</sup>

Further, throughout the whole of this period, the care of the books of any monastery - certainly of the choir, and usually of the library also - was always one of the responsibilities of the precentor. The surviving precentor's accounts of a fair number of major monastic institutions were searched during the preparation of this thesis.<sup>3</sup> Repairs to, and purchases of, plainsong service books for the choir are commonplace enough, as is only to be expected. However, not a single reference to any repair, writing, binding or purchase of any book of polyphonic music was found to occur at all. The conclusion seems inescapable; during the second half of the fourteenth century, enterprise in musical innovation, and the English monks, parted company almost completely.

- 
1. I am grateful to Dr.R.M. Thomson, of the University of Sydney(Australia) for this information; it is, apparently, drawn from the appropriate volumes of RISM.
  2. Two fragments attributable to Canterbury Cathedral Priory form an exception to this rule; see below, pp.4070, 5048. B.M. Egerton 3307 was once thought to have originated at the Cistercian Abbey of Meaux in Yorkshire - see MF Bukofzer, "Holy Week Music and Carols at Meaux Abbey" in Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music, p.114. This has been convincingly refuted in MMB p.275; and G. McPeck has since collected and presented evidence - of varying quality - showing St.George's Chapel, Windsor to have some claim as a more probable provenance of the manuscript:- G.McPeck, Egerton 3307, pp.7-14. It may here be pointed out that the underlying reasons for Dr.Harrison's rejection of Meaux Abbey as the provenance of this MS, seem no less applicable to the so-called 'Fountains Fragment', BM Add.MS 40011B. Although discovered in the binding of a memorandum book of Fountains Abbey 1446-60, all the chants on which the compositions are based are those of the secular Salisbury Use, and not of the regular Cistercian Use. The music could therefore not have originated at the Cistercian Fountains Abbey. See M.F.Bukofzer, "The Fountains Fragment", in Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music, p.101; Bukofzer appreciated the inconsistency, but did not draw the unavoidable conclusion - ibid., p.91
  3. These include Ely, Norwich, Worcester, Glastonbury, Bristol(St.Augustine's), St. Benet at Hulme, Leicester (St. Mary de Pratis), Oseney, et al. No precentor's accounts have survived from Canterbury Cathedral Priory, where prevailing conditions might have produced a different result.

There are a few exceptions to this rule, to be found among the very greatest and most prominent of these monasteries. There survive in the Chapter Library of Canterbury Cathedral fragments of manuscripts of polyphonic music dating from the late 13th to the mid-15th century; all seem very likely to have originated at the cathedral priory itself.<sup>1</sup> All are settings either of liturgical texts that would certainly have been performed in the monks' choir, or of motets that are unlikely to have been performed anywhere else. They include late 13th century settings of Alleluias, including an Alleluia for Lady Mass, Salve virgo; motets of the mid 14th and mid 15th century, including Dunstable's Preco prehemencie, otherwise unknown in any English source; and mid-15th century settings of the office antiphons Vidi aquam egredientem and Asperges me domine<sup>2</sup>.

At Canterbury at least, skill in singing polyphonic music remained a talent that was highly valued among the monks, and was among those contributions to the life of the monastery which was deemed worthy of inclusion in the obituary notices of deceased monks. These were written over the years by a succession of inmates, and were eventually collected into a single volume, compiled in 1536, which is still preserved in the Cathedral Library.<sup>3</sup> The most carefully written notices date from the period 1395-1454, and some of them that concerned the skilled singers give a little information about the state of the music of the Cathedral between those dates.

Of the precentor John Stanys (received 1399, died 19 December 1421) it was claimed that he was the outstanding singer of polyphonic music of his time; he organised (disposuit) and directed all the polyphony sung in the cathedral 'to the great praise and honour of the church'.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. CDC, box of binding fragments; Mr. Nicholas Sandon, of Exeter University, is reported to be preparing an inventory and description of these fragments for publication.
  2. These last items are on three separate fragments apparently coming from a roll, rather than a book, of music; one setting is seemingly attributed to one 'Symon benet'. A further fragment, of a 5-part Magnificat of c.1500, is discussed below, p. 6057.
  3. CDC Lit. MS. D.12. A digest of the contents of the profession and obituary lists in this MS, and of two similar volumes, appears in ed. W.G.Searle, Christ Church Canterbury, pp.168 et seq. Further information is in ed. W.G. Searle, Christ Church Canterbury:- The Chronicle of John Stone, *ibid.*, p.1 et seq.
  4. ibid., pp.12, 185, CDC Lit. MS D 12 fo.21v. Organising the singing of polyphonic settings when appropriate was probably part of the standing duty of the precentor at Canterbury.

Stanys' predecessor as precentor, John Borne (professed 1381, died 22 September 1420) had successively filled the offices of tercius cantor, succentor and precentor through some 30 years. Stone recorded that he was not a singer of polyphony; and he seems apologetically to be seeking to compensate for this in adding that 'however, he had the very finest voice of all the monks in the kingdom'.<sup>1</sup> John Moundfeld (professed c.1386, died 25 September 1408) was 'a superb singer of polyphony'; and William Bonyngton (professed 1381, died 1411) was described as 'exceedingly learned in the singing and playing of polyphonic music.'<sup>2</sup> Of John Cranbrook (professed 1406, died 20 October 1447) it was claimed that he was the finest singer of polyphony of his time.<sup>3</sup> Of Cranbrook's contemporaries, the precentor Geoffrey Bonde (received 1408, died 5 October 1446) was mourned at his death as Flos precentorum, laicorum vel monachorum - 'the flower of precentors, secular or monk.'<sup>4</sup>

It seems fairly clear, therefore, that at least throughout the period covered by the most detailed of the obituary lists (c.1380 - 1454) high standards in the singing of the liturgy were valued and cultivated among the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury. Polyphony continued to be sung in the monks' choir, and the soloists who performed it were held in particular esteem by their fellows. Canterbury's reputation stood sufficiently high to cause musically talented monks - Stanys and Bonde being two of them - to desert their own monasteries and join Canterbury, where they were considered very welcome.<sup>5</sup> However, all those whose names were celebrated are known only as executive musicians. Neither the compilers of the obituary lists, nor the chronicler John Stone, ever claimed that these monks were composers:- a significant omission.

Canterbury's isolation as a monastery where the monks retained the impulse to cultivate the more demanding means of the musical expression of devotion may not have been absolutely complete. At Michaelmas 1402 the prior and convent of Winchester Cathedral Priory took into their employment one John Tyes. Among his duties<sup>6</sup> was that of attending in the monks' choir to assist with the singing on such festival days as were

1. W.G. Searle, Christ Church Canterbury, pp.11, 183

2. ibid., p.183; CDC Lit. MS D.12 ff.19r., 19v.

3. ibid. p.185; CDC Lit. MS. D.12 fo.25r.

4. ibid. pp.40, 185; CDC Lit. MS. D 12 fo.25r.

5. See below, pp. 4073-4 For further observations on the music of the monks' choir, see below, p. 5048.

6. See also below, pp. 4090-1.



of sufficient importance for the Lord prior, or the president of the chapter, to celebrate mass, and indeed on all occasions when polyphonic settings occasioned to be sung there - evidently by Tyes and two or three of the abler monks. From Christmas Eve to the morrow of Epiphany, throughout Holy Week and Easter Week, throughout Whitsun, and on all other double feasts of the year, - i.e. on those occasions when he would be kept most busy - Tyes was entitled to dine with the prior in the prior's hall; similarly, on those days when he had been singing polyphony in the quire of the cathedral, he might take dinner in the prior's hall, even if not specifically invited.<sup>1</sup> Winchester monks still performed polyphony, therefore, even though they did now employ a layman to avail themselves of lay expertise in managing its performance.

At Durham Cathedral Priory also, the singing of polyphony was still practised by the monks, though again, with the assistance of hired laymen. In 1387/8 the hostillar contributed 2s. 6d. to the salary of Nicholas Cantor and paid 6s. 8d. for a processioner and 3s. 4d. for a book of polyphony (liber organi)<sup>2</sup>. Among the complaints made at the time of a visitation of the Priory which is dateable to the decade 1384-1393 was one to the effect that "there were accustomed to be clerks singing polyphony, and helping the monks in three-part singing - and now there are not, to the great nuisance and tedium of the brethren singing in choir."<sup>3</sup> Such wording shows that polyphonic music was seen as a valuable means of introducing some variety into what the monks were coming to consider as the monotony of an unrelieved diet of plainsong. The prior was required to have these abuses corrected 'before the next provincial chapter'; the expenditure from the hostillar's account of 1387/8 may represent part of the action taken in response to this injunction.

- 
1. WinDC Priory Register I (1345-1496) fo.15v. A transcription of this indenture appears in full as Appendix CI below, p. A054.
  2. ed. J.T. Fowler, Extracts from the Account Rolls, vol.1 p.134
  3. 'Item compertum est quod solebant esse clerici cantantes organum et adiuuantes monachos in cantu qui dicitur trebill, et iam non sunt, in magnum nocumentum et tedium fratrum cantancium in choro':- ed. W.A. Pantin, Chapters of the Black Monks, vol.3 p.84. 'Trebill' appears to be the English word 'treble', meaning 'three-fold'. The heading of the document is ambiguous; D.Knowles (The Religious Orders, vol.3., p.16 fn.3) took it to refer to a visitation of St.Mary's Abbey, York, but its content clearly confirms Dr. Pantin's assumption that it refers to Durham Cathedral Priory.

The prevailing shortage of monks skilled in singing polyphony is indicated by the content of an Ordinal of St. Mary's Abbey, York, dateable to c.1400. There permission was given for the singing of two and three-part polyphony on festivals, by the monk organiste - ie. the singers of cantus organici - when there were any.<sup>1</sup> These four examples exhaust the instances yet discovered of the exercise by monastic communities of polyphonic music in the course of their own performance of the liturgy in the monks' choirs in the period c.1360 - c.1450. Nor does the list grow very much longer for the subsequent last 90 years of English monasticism.

In view of the almost total absence of any monk-composers, and of any manuscripts of polyphony which can be shown to have been used at monasteries in this period, there are grounds for believing that of the greater monasteries generally, St.Alban's Abbey is an example more typical than those considered so far. St.Alban's was one of the greatest abbeys in the Kingdom; in terms of wealth, dignity, distinction, esteem and mystique it yielded little or nothing to any of its rivals - Glastonbury, Canterbury, Westminster or any other. However, it is clear that even at this great abbey, musical enterprise and initiative had so totally lapsed<sup>2</sup> that a musically talented monk had no alternative but to seek to take the unusual course of securing release from his own abbey to migrate to another. In 1408 Geoffrey Bonde, then a monk of St.Albans, having made his profession there, migrated to Christ Church, Canterbury, where he died as precentor in 1446<sup>3</sup>. Almost certainly he was the guilty party who, as a monk who had already left St. Albans for Canterbury, subsequently "offered the apple of temptation to a pliable brother [a second monk of St. Albans] to eat, and promised him equal knowledge with the gods in the art of music, of which art he was a student, if he would eat it".

1. Relevant extracts in MMB p.114 and footnotes.

2. In c.1410 this may have been only a recent development. It was written of Thomas de la Mare, abbot 1349-96, that "he greatly rejoiced in the singing of his monks, better singers than whom he thought could not be procured" (ed. T.H. Riley, Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani vol.2, p.401). For evidence of a decline in the artistic life of the convent c.1400, see V.H. Galbraith, ed. The St.Albans Chronicle pp. xxxviii-xli. For some polyphonic settings of music possibly in use at St.Albans Abbey as late as c.1350, see M.Bent, "New and little known fragments", 21 Journal of the American Musicological Society (1968) p.137.

3. CDC Lit. MS. D 12 fo.25r.; and see above p. 4071.

This occurred in 1421. The monk, William Powns, fell for the bait; aided by the mediation of the archbishop of Canterbury, Henry Chichele, who added his own request that Powns be granted permission to migrate, the Abbot of St. Albans at last gave his leave<sup>1</sup>, and Powns made new profession at Canterbury in 1422.<sup>2</sup>

This story testifies to the high reputation for music which Canterbury must have enjoyed at that time; but it also indicates the degree to which at least one major Benedictine Abbey had abandoned the musical arts. To find a sympathetic and congenial milieu, musically talented monks simply had to go elsewhere. Abbot Wheathamstead (elected 1420) took two courses of action to prevent this happening again. Firstly, he took oaths of all the remaining monks not to desert the monastery; secondly, he saw to the appointment of two lay singers of polyphony to attend services in the monks' choir whenever necessary thenceforth, to improve the standard of the music there.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. ed. W. T. Riley, Annales Monasterii Sancti Albani, vol. 1, pp. 89-91
  2. as William de Sancto Albano - W. G. Searle, Christ Church Canterbury pp. 186-7. Canterbury gained less from Powns' migration than it had done from Bonde's. Powns soon found himself in circumstances where he had to migrate again (ed. J. B. Sheppard, Litterae Cantuarienses, vol. 3, pp. 172-6) entering the Premonstratensian house of Boxley, Kent; eventually he gave up his monastic vows altogether, and reverted to being a secular priest (OBL, MS Corpus Christi College 256, fo. 168v.) Of John Stany's (see above, p. 4070), it was similarly recorded that he had made his first profession not at Canterbury, but at Bermondsey Priory, and had subsequently migrated to Canterbury - CDC Lit. MS D 12 ff. 5v.
  3. H. T. Riley, ed. Annales Monasterii Sancti Albani, vol. 1, pp. 97, 106-7, discussed in more detail below, p. 4099.

#### 4.6.2. The Lady Chapel choirs.

##### (a) The monastic Lady Mass and the laity.

However, monasticism did not desert either the arts, or the enhancement of the liturgy altogether. In fields where monks had once been the leading exponents, they now adopted the role of patron to secular practitioners. In the field of the liturgy, this could most appropriately be done in relation to services held outside the monks' choir, independently of the basic routine of the daily recitation of High Mass and the canonical Hours. The obvious instance where this could very appropriately happen was at the daily Lady Mass in the Lady Chapel.

One of the principal features of late medieval Christian devotion was the adoration of the Virgin Mary. From the late 12th century onward, in all great churches, secular and monastic, chapels were either set aside, or specially built, to provide a specific site where this worship could be conducted. The earliest known institution of a daily Lady Mass was at Rochester Cathedral Priory, during the reign of King Stephen. The source of this information may not be wholly accurate, but the mid-12th century is certainly about the period at which this devotion first began to become common; and during the 13th century its observance gradually became universal.<sup>1</sup> As this devotion to the Virgin deepened, it began to find a general expression in the embellishment of chapels and churches dedicated to her with the finest resources that craftsmanship could provide, in terms of vestments, images, plate, carving in stone and wood - and music. The many fragments of polyphonic settings of cantilene on Marian texts from the 14th century, and the emergence of the large-scale polyphonic Marian antiphon, Magnificat and votive Mass in the 15th, constitute the musical expression of this adoration of the Virgin Mary.

In monasteries, the daily Lady Mass had one or two peculiar characteristics which marked it out from the rest of the monks' religious observances. The monastery church was built to the glory

---

1. D. Knowles, The Religious Orders, vol.1, p.543;  
vol.3, p.16.

of God, and as the scene of the monks' devotions. No matter what its dimensions, great or small, it was essentially the monks' private chapel. Its quire was equipped and laid out for their daily observance of the Opus Dei; its nave was provided for the processions which formed an integral part of the liturgy, and was equipped with the side altars where monks in priest's orders said their daily private masses. From this church, the lay public was normally excluded at all times; exceptions to this rule had to be made in the cases of churches which contained relics which were the object of pilgrimage, but still, no lay person was ever admitted to the choir at times when divine service was in progress.<sup>1</sup> A "congregational service" was an idea totally foreign to the medieval experience. Monks, and cathedral and college clergy, existed to praise and worship God, to which activity they addressed themselves quite independently of the presence or absence of anyone else; indeed, the greater the distance at which the secular world could be kept, the better.

At the monasteries, Lady Mass could conveniently be treated as an exception to this rule. Popular devotion to the Virgin was intense; but a daily sung Lady Mass was something which - until the late 15th century - few parish churches, in city or country, could offer. However, the monasteries did perform sung Lady Mass daily - and always in its separate Lady Chapel, distinct from the monastic quire. Given that by the end of the 13th century, the ideal of the physical separation of the monastic world from the lay world by the precinct wall was already showing distinct signs of attenuation<sup>2</sup>, it was not unreasonable for the devout laity to be permitted to enter the monastery precincts to stand in the Lady Chapel and hear the monks' daily sung Lady Mass. By the early 14th century, so much advantage was being taken of this privilege that at some monasteries orders had to be made regulating the attendance of the lay public, to minimise the distraction to the monks.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Except that a patron of the church, or a very exalted personage indeed, might very exceptionally attend at Mass or Vespers.
  2. See e.g. Archbishop Robert Winchelsey's eighth injunction to Worcester Cathedral Priory in 1301. Ep.Reg. Montacute vol ii:- WorRO MS 2648/2 (iii) fo.44v.; WorDC MS A xii fo.119v.
  3. Norwich Cathedral Priory 1309:- E.H.Carter, Studies in Norwich Cathedral History, p.21; Ely Cathedral Priory, late 13th century:- S.J.A.Evans, Ely Chapter Ordinances p.23

From admitting the lay public to hear Mass, it was only a small step to inviting any who had some particular skill to contribute to its performance actually to do so. In the monks' quire, services were celebrated with special festivity on the great days of the Christian year, and on locally important festivals. Celebration of Lady Mass on such days would reflect this, and any opportunity to add extra dignity could be accepted, especially on festivals of the Virgin herself. One method of doing this would be the provision of extra singers to take part in the celebration. These could of course be fellow-monks; but it was not improper to accept the opportunity of hiring skilled lay singers, the Lady Chapel being the one site in the monastery church where the irregularity of the participation of laymen in divine service could most easily be overlooked. A series of ten account-rolls of the monk-Warden of the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral covering the years 1356-1384, is still extant<sup>1</sup>; these reveal payments both to monks and to visiting secular singers for singing in the Lady Chapel on festival days. These include 3s. 4d. to monks and others, singing in the chapel in 1375/6; an unknown sum in 1379/80 to secular clerks singing in the chapel on the major local feast, the translation of St. Etheldreda; and an unknown sum in 1383/4 to monks occupied at mass in the chapel.<sup>2</sup>

(b) Early Lady Chapel choirs.

From inviting lay singers to enhance the celebration of Lady Mass on specially festive occasions, it was but another short step to the next stage:- that of establishing a permanent small team of lay singers to attend Lady Mass on a regular daily basis.

---

1. EDC Custos Capelle 1-8, OBL Cambridgeshire Rolls 4; most of these documents are now too badly damaged to consult, and reliance must be placed on the transcripts made by J.H. Crosby, CUL Add MS 6383 pp.1-93. W. Stevenson, A Supplement.... p.64 quotes from accounts of 1349 and 1350 which are no longer extant.

2. EDC Custos Capelle 5b, 6, 8.

These monastery Lady Chapel choirs had no statutory composition or constitution, and many are very obscure. The decision to establish one was presumably taken by act of chapter, but no text of any such Chapter Act has yet come to light. What can be discovered about them has painfully to be gleaned from the terse language of account rolls, and from the thankfully more fulsome terms in which are couched the indentures of appointment of the choir-masters, of which a fair number have survived. In order to create a coherent picture, it may sometimes be necessary to exceed the rough time boundaries of this chapter, and draw on evidence dating from adjacent periods.

The period of the establishment of Lady Chapel choirs extended over a century and a half.<sup>1</sup> The earliest can be traced to the 1370's; while those at St. Osyth's Abbey, Essex, and Winchcombe Abbey, Gloucestershire, were created as late as the 1510's and 1520's respectively.<sup>2</sup> The two earliest appeared in churches where the architectural peculiarity of the existence of two Lady Chapels most easily obscured the technical irregularity of admitting laymen to participate in service in a monastic church. Normally daily Lady Mass - wherever in the church it was celebrated - was conducted by the monks themselves:- a monk in priest's orders as celebrant, two others as deacon and subdeacon, others as altar servers, still others merely present to hear mass.<sup>3</sup> At this Lady Mass, as has been seen, the attendance of the laity could be tolerated at all times, and the participation of lay singers was not discouraged on festivals.

- 
1. The group of priests established to sing service in the Lady Chapel of Glastonbury Abbey in 1333 was not a Lady Chapel choir as such, but rather a small college of chantry priests which happened to have been founded in the Lady Chapel of a great monastery:- ed. A. Watkin, The Glastonbury Chartulary, vol.3, pp.724-6
  2. For St. Osyth's, see PRO SC 6 Henry VIII 939-944, SC 6 Addenda 3479/13, E 117 10/26, E 117 10/28, E 117 11/25; For Winchcombe, see PRO LR 6 29/2 mm.10v-11v., SC 6 Eliz 1/751 m.10r., VE vol.2, pp.459-60, A.F. Leach, The Schools of Medieval England, pp.227-8, A.F. Leach in VCH Gloucestershire, vol.2, pp.420-1.
  3. For orders regulating the entablement and attendance of monks at Lady Mass see e.g. E.H. Carter, Studies in Norwich Cathedral History pp.26,29; at Canterbury Cathedral, BM Galba E iv ff.72v., 75r.; BM Arundel 68 fo.56r.

However, it was where there was a second Lady Chapel, with a second celebration of Lady Mass not conducted by the monks at all, that the creation of lay secular Lady Chapel choirs seems to have begun.

The earliest documentary references to a Lady Chapel in Worcester Cathedral date from the late 13th century, and refer to the Lady Chapel at the East end of the church beyond the high altar.<sup>1</sup> This was the commonest location for the Lady Chapel in a great church; and it is probable that this was intended as the cathedral's principal Lady Chapel from the time that it was built, c.1225-50. Lying east of the screen which separated the choir from the nave, it lay within that part of the cathedral which was reserved for the use of the monks of the priory, except for the admission of pilgrims to the tombs of Saints Oswald and Wulstan. It has left few memorials in the Cathedral archives; but it is probable that here each day three or more of the monks came to perform daily Lady Mass - a ritual which most probably persisted without interruption until the dissolution of the priory in 1540.<sup>2</sup>

Totally distinct from the monks' Lady Chapel east of the High Altar, there was a second Lady Chapel situated west of the choir screen in the nave of the church. On 21 September 1310 bishop Walter Reynolds dedicated an altar in the nave to the Virgin Mary;<sup>3</sup> it was therefore in that part of the cathedral to which secular priests and the laity could have access to hear mass, and its importance was assured when, 5 years later, William Colle, a citizen of Worcester, granted the priory an endowment to maintain <sup>in perpetuity</sup> a secular chaplain to say mass at the altar daily for the sake of his soul.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. For references dating from 1287, 1292 and 1306 see I.A. Atkins, Early Occupants of the office of Organist, pp.3-4
  2. When it would have been taken over by the minor canons and choir of the New Foundation cathedral. Some basic regulations for the conduct of this daily Lady Mass appear in the injunctions sent by Archbishop Whittlesey to the prior and convent in 1301 - Ep.Reg. Montacute vol.ii - WorRO b 716.093 BA 2648/2 (iii) fo.44r.; WorDC MS A xii fo.118r.
  3. Liber Albus - WorDC MS A v, fo.45v.
  4. Liber Pensionum - WorDC MS A iii fo.54v. The benefaction of William Colle was granted to the Sacrist's office; and all surviving Sacrist's accounts thenceforth record his payment of the chaplain's annual salary:- WorDC C425-30, 498; MS A xii fo.35r; A xvii p.284; C415.



The altar was now referred to as "the altar of the blessed Mary at the red door of the church"; by 1381 it had been enclosed and was known as "the Lady Chapel at the Red Door".<sup>1</sup> Apparently it stood at the west end of the North nave aisle, and was fitted up like a large chantry chapel with a miniature sanctuary and quire with choir stalls.<sup>2</sup> The image of the Virgin, which must have been the focal point of the chapel, was the object of some special devotion; as late as 1514/5 the sacrist was deriving a large income of over £40 from the sale of candlewax offered to the image, and in 1533/4 the sum exceeded £70.<sup>3</sup> As an object of pilgrimage, 'our lady of Worchester' was commemorated after the Reformation in a doggerel verse preserved in Foxe's Acts and Monuments.<sup>4</sup>

The terms of William Colle's charter of 1315<sup>5</sup> make it clear that his perpetual chaplain at the Lady Altar 'next the Red Door' began life as a straightforward chantry establishment. The endowment was provided by a layman; the chaplain was a secular priest; he celebrated for a private intention down in the nave of the church. As such, attendance at this mass could never have been part of any duty incumbent upon the monks; they had their own Lady Chapel and their own daily Lady Mass at the East end of the church.

Almost total obscurity surrounds the stages whereby the priory became endowed with property for the maintenance of the nave Lady Chapel far beyond that of Colle's original grant.<sup>6</sup>

---

1. WorDC MS A xii fo.77v.

2. In emendacione pavimenti in Capella et les stall' ibidem jd ob:- Custos Capelle A/C 1414/5, WorDC C 267. In j panno Steygnet empto ad pendendum coram Clericis in Choro Capelle predicte ix s:- Custos Capelle A/c 1402/3, WorDC C 258.

3. WorDC MS A xii 35r., C415. The value of the image and its appurtenances may be judged from the list of items stolen by thieves in 1480 - Ep. Reg. Alcock:- WorRO b716.093 BA 2648/7 fo.64v.

4. ed.J.Pratt, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, vol.5, p.405.

5. Liber Pensionum:- WorDC MS A iii fo.54v.

6. One of what was probably many small benefactions can be traced to 1332 - CPR 1330-4, p.338.

By 1341/2 the priory had found it necessary to create a new obedience, the Custos Capelle Beate Marie to administer these endowments as a separate financial entity<sup>1</sup>; and by the early 1390's, when this obedientiary's accounts begin to survive, the Chapel's annual income exceeded £11 p.a.<sup>2</sup>

By 1391 this income was partly being used to maintain a small stipendiary choir of secular clerks to attend at the [Lady] Mass celebrated daily in the chapel according to Colles' foundation. The origins of this choir, too, are wholly obscure. Robert, clerk of the Lady Chapel, is mentioned on the Almoner's account for 1345/6; John, clerk serving in the Lady Chapel, occurs on the Precentor's account for 1350/1.<sup>3</sup> Single clerks such as these are most likely to be of the general odd-job-man type, of which one certainly was employed at Ely.<sup>4</sup> However, the clerks of the chapel mentioned - in the plural - on the Almoner's account for 1374/5 may very well have been the team of singing clerks.<sup>5</sup> Be that as it may, it is clear that by 1391, the date of the earliest surviving Custos Capelle accounts, the small Lady Chapel choir was certainly a going concern. For the period 1390-1430 no less than 33 Custos Capelle accounts survive<sup>6</sup>, and from these it is possible to glean some concrete information about the constitution and duties of this choir.

Basically, the Lady Chapel choir consisted of just three singing-clerks. This was the number maintained consistently throughout the 1391-1430 period, falling below it only during occasional vacancies.<sup>7</sup>

1. first mentioned on the Almoner's A/c for 1341/2 - WorDC C170.
2. The earliest account covering a full year is that for 1392/3:- WorDC C251.
3. WorDC C171, C354.
4. He was paid 4d. per week, and cleaned the gutters - EDC Custos Capelle 8.
5. WorDC C173:- Receipts included....de corodio fratris J. Newport defuncti a Michaele usque assumptionem nil hic, quia medietas inde assignabatur clericis capelle et altera medietas ffratribus minorum et predicatorum...
6. WorDC C250-278, and C 289. C 248-9, listed in the printed Catalogue (ed. W.H. Bloom, Worcestershire Historical Society (1907)) as the accounts for 1356/7 and 1375, were in fact strays, and have now been returned to Norwich (NDC Roll 45) and Ely (EDC Custos Capelle 5b) respectively.
7. A fourth clerk, John Cheverel, appeared briefly in 1406/7 and 1407/8. He, however, was not a singing-clerk, but a lawyer retained in connection with a suit about property which the Custos was prosecuting at the time - WorDC C259,260.

The salary scale ranged from 20s. to 40s. p.a. at the most, plus an annual livery of cloth.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally the Custos might pay for a clerk's board and lodging, but normally this was not the case; therefore these annual salaries stood some way below a reasonable living wage, and point the fact that the duties of these clerks did not extend beyond turning up each morning to sing Lady Mass. Their duties were thus quite different from those of the vicars and clerks of the choirs of collegiate institutions, who had a fulltime job singing the whole routine of the daily Opus Dei. At a monastery this was done by the monks; the clerks of the Lady Chapel choir sang Lady Mass each morning, and presumably had other jobs to go to for the rest of the day. If ever the prior and convent called upon them to take part in services which were understood not to be part of their agreed work, they were paid extra; thus in 1407/8 each of the three clerks was given a new pair of hose in return for singing, extra convencionem eorum, the prose Salve festa dies<sup>2</sup>, which occurred during the monks' procession before Mass on certain major festivals.

None of the chapel clerks was ever described as capellanus or given the title dom[inus], so it seems very fair to assume that all were laymen, and probably lived outside the monastery precinct. John Herford (clerk before 1392-1412) certainly did so, renting a house owned by the almoner.<sup>3</sup> One may have been married with children:- one of the boys of the chapel choir was identified on the account for 1395/6 as 'filius Thomas Syngar', possibly the same man as the 'Thomas Clericus' who was one of the three singing clerks of the chapel that year.<sup>4</sup> The members of the Lady Chapel choir thus fall into the category of lay-clerks, which was undergoing rapid expansion at this time.

- 
1. Occasionally there might also be weekly liveries of ale - WorDC C86a (Cellarer's A/c. Aug.-Sept. 1432).
  2. WorDC C260:- ...In curialitate data eisdem [iij clericis capelle] causa Salve festa dies et al' extra convencionem eorum ut in iij paribus caligarum datis eisdem iijs.
  3. WorDC C187, Almoner's A/c 1404/5:- Custus domorum Wygornie - Solut' ij carpentariis operantibus circa diversa tenementa videlicet Johannis herford....
  4. WorDC C253. The boys who make sporadic appearances on the Custos Capelle accounts are discussed below, pp. 4087-9.

Of the music sung and performed in the Lady Chapel not much is known. It could have accorded with the most advanced music then available, provided it required no more than three voices. The chapel was provided with service-books, which required repair from time to time<sup>1</sup>; and in 1436 someone was sent to Pershore, apparently to acquire a copy of a setting of the Passion.<sup>2</sup> Polyphonic music - either composed settings or improvised renderings - was performed on appropriate occasions; presumably these were settings of or for Lady Mass, the staple musical diet of the Lady Chapel choir. Some visiting clerks sang polyphony in the chapel in 1392/3<sup>3</sup>; and in 1395/6 4d. was spent on parchment, intentionally for a book of polyphony, though in the end it was used for writing the account-roll on<sup>4</sup>. A largely illegible entry on the account for 1408/9 records the payment of 6s. 8d. to a clerk or clerks for singing polyphony<sup>5</sup>; and in 1414/5 T[homas] Hulot, apparently still one of the boys of the chapel (as he had been in 1408/9<sup>6</sup>) was paid 2s. for singing plainsong and (?) descant in the chapel<sup>7</sup>.

The chapel contained one organ at least, which underwent repairs in 1417/8; being called the 'great organ' the term may presuppose a little organ as well.<sup>8</sup> In 1434/5 an organ was sold, realising the sum of 33s. 4d.<sup>9</sup> The presence of the permanent Lady Chapel choir

- 
1. In 1397/8 (C255:- j liber), 1399/1400 (C256:- In papero empto pro j libro in dicta capella iiij d.) and 1414/5 (C267:- binding and covering one missal).
  2. WorDC C279a....item equitanti versus peshore pro Passione habenda et Cantanda xvj d. Although this payment was made by the Custos Capelle the circumstances under which a setting of the Passion might be performed in the Lady Chapel are far from evident.
  3. WorDC C251:- In expensis clericorum extraneorum cantancium organiam in Capella per vices in hostilaria viij d.
  4. WorDC C253:- In parcamino empto pro j libro de Organ' fac [to] in rotulum compoti iiij d.
  5. WorDC C261:- ... .. organizant' per vices pro labore suo vjs viij d.
  6. WorDC C261:- In panno empto pro T hulet puero de capella viz ij virgis di' cum factura vs ijd.
  7. WorDC C267:- In rewardis datis T hulot cantanti et organizanti in capella per vices ij s. Item iij aliis pueris cantantibus ibidem per vices xx d. A similar entry for 1392/3 (WorDC C251) remains untranslatable:- Stipendia ... Item T[home] clerico cant [anti] Meon' per iij terminos xx s.
  8. WorDC C269:- In emendacione organorum magnorum ultra cum Wyr tabulis pellibus et aliis eis indigentibus emptis iijs viijd.
  9. WorDC C279, After the final calculation of a deficit of 16s.11d. on the year's account, there appears:- Post on[eratus est] de xxxiis iiijd. quos comp[utat] de vend[icione] organum. Et sic remanet in manibus dicti computantis xvj s. v d.

did not prevent the Lady Mass there being further enhanced by the participation of visiting singers from time to time. Among those who came in 1392 were some singers from Evesham, and one dom. Nicholas Stoke, a clerk of the Earl of Worcester, possibly identifiable with the Nicholas Stokes who became the first known Master of the Lady Chapel choir at Ely Cathedral in c.1407.<sup>1</sup> Clerks of the chapel of Joan, Lady Bergoveny were welcomed in 1421, 1422 and 1423; and other singers were paid for occasional work in the Lady Chapel in 1392/3, 1395/6, 1411/14, 1426-30 and 1434-6<sup>2</sup>. The musical scene around the nave Lady Chapel was therefore far from dead.

Evidence of one other comparable Lady Chapel choir has so far been discovered. In 1374 Walter Legh, prior of Worcester, made a visitation of the Abbey of St. Augustine, Bristol, a wealthy monastery of Augustinian canons, (now Bristol Cathedral). Among his injunctions sent to the abbot as a result was one requiring that "as soon as possible provision be made of secular clerks bound to sing in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, and let them be maintained there as it used to be done formerly"<sup>3</sup>. The Bristol choir may well have been an exact twin of that maintained at Worcester, the crucial point permitting its appearance at each place being the existence of a second Lady Chapel, one having no connection with the monastic observance of the Opus Dei at all, and therefore a potential scene for secular musical development. At Bristol, there was the "elder Lady Chapel", a separate chapel adjacent to the North choir aisle, built c.1220; and an East end Lady Chapel, built c.1300 within the canons' private area east of the choir screen. The former chapel seems most likely to have been the one in which the clerks sang. The result of this injunction is not known; no more has yet been discovered about this Lady Chapel choir prior to the date of the earliest surviving account roll, that for 1491/2.<sup>4</sup>

1. WorDC C250....In expensis domini Nicholai Stoke Clerici Comitris Warr' et aliorum Cantorum de Evesham in hostilaria per vices xv d.

2. WorDC C251, 253, 264-6, 271-2, 272a, 275-9, 279a, 280.

3. Register sede vacante:- WorDC MS A i, fo.179r.:- item provideatur quamcicuis poterit de Clericis secularibus cantare debentibus in Capella beate virginis et sustententur ibidem prout solebat ab antiquo.

4. ed. G. Beachcroft and A. Sabin, Two Comptus Rolls of St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol; and see below, pp. 6044-6.

Small-scale Lady Chapel choirs such as those which came into existence at Bristol and Worcester during the last half of the 14th century leave few records in any source other than the account rolls of the officer deputed to administer its finances. It is possible that choirs of this type were extremely unusual anyway prior to c.1400; in any event, these two are the only examples yet to come to light.

(c) The employment of boys at Lady Mass in monastic churches.

The establishment backlash to the Wycliffe heresy provided a stimulus for the creation of further Lady Chapel choirs. For the monasteries sought for means whereby they could share in the prevailing concern for the enhancement of divine service - though without, apparently, wishing to place too many fresh burdens on the monks themselves. One acceptable way of doing this was the establishment of a Lady Chapel choir, to assist daily at the monks' celebration of Lady Mass. The participation of lay singers at this Mass was already an established practice on festivals; so monasteries which did not have the luxury of two Lady Chapels could still, now the stimulus existed, without too great impropriety establish a secular choir to sing daily in the monastic chapel. Such a step would at the same time discharge the monastery's duty to display its adherence to orthodox doctrines and practices, and also express its involvement with contemporary devotion to the Virgin.

However, the type of choir already established at Worcester and Bristol by the 1370's, consisting of three solo men's voices, was appropriate only to the devotional and musical needs of its own particular time. By the first decade of the 15th century, new fashions were evolving in response to the Lollard challenge. The willingness of religious institutions to avail themselves of lay expertise in the performance of the musical side of worship has already been noticed; so too has the sudden surge in the emphasis placed on the participation of boy choristers in liturgical choirs. The Lady Chapel choirs created in the first two decades of the 15th century, at such of the greater monasteries as were sufficiently prominent to consider themselves expected to do so, reflected these trends; consequently, they were constituted in a fashion totally different from those of the previous era. They were composed not of men's voices, but of a team of boys under the direction of a single

adult lay Master of the Choir, to whom was usually given the title Cantor.

The inauguration of such a choir was made easier by the fact that it was merely the last in a series of steps whereby the participation of secular boys was anyway being gradually introduced into the monastic celebration of daily Lady Mass from the last quarter of the 14th century onwards. The boys themselves, indeed, had long been to hand, though as a result of a quite different set of circumstances. During the first two decades of the 14th century many of the greater Benedictine monasteries had established on their premises either hostels or small-scale grammar schools for boys, normally in the almonry on the very edge of the precincts. The purpose of this was apparently to satisfy the demands of a statute passed between 1301 and 1309 by the Canterbury provincial chapter (extended to York in 1343) requiring every monastery to be able to supply altar-boys to serve the monks at their private masses. By the second half of the 14th century, a number of such hostels or schools are known to have been going concerns:- at Norwich (by 1309), Ely (by 1314), Canterbury (by 1320), Worcester (by c.1340), St.Albans (by 1339), Durham (by 1352), Westminster (by 1355), Whitby (before 1366) and Reading (by 1375)<sup>1</sup>.

Monasteries which had established such almonry schools, therefore, were already well used to the idea of secular boys living within the monastery precinct, some of them coming into the monastery church each morning to serve the monks at their private masses celebrated at the side-altars in the nave of the church. So once the fad for emphasising the attendance of boys at divine service set in towards the end of the 14th century, it was no great step forward to begin to employ the almonry boys at another daily service, one where the attendance at, and participation in, of lay people was already well established - daily Lady Mass in the Lady Chapel. The last of the

---

1. This is a very brief digest of a very long story. No adequate study of almonry schools has yet been written. Sources do exist, but they are difficult to interpret; and even those which provide the material for this brief paragraph are too numerous to list here in full. However, particular reliance was placed on the accounts and registers of the Almoners of the cathedral priories of Norwich, Ely, Canterbury, Worcester and Durham, and of the abbeys of Reading and St.Albans; on ed. W.A. Pantin, Chapters of the Black Monks; and on ed. A.H. Thompson, Visitations of religious houses in the diocese of Lincoln, 1420-49.

surviving 14th century accounts of the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral is the earliest to mention the recruitment of boys to participate in the Lady Mass. It dates from 1383/4 and records a payment of 2s. 'given to the boys occupied in the chapel at the Mass of St. Mary'.<sup>1</sup> At Norwich also there is evidence from much the same period that certain boys, probably almonry boys, had become associated in some way with the services held in the Lady Chapel. The Almoner's Rolls for 1378/9 - 1390/1<sup>2</sup> contain a composite entry recording his expenditure on gifts of wine on specific occasions or to specific people, including the pueri beate virginis, alternatively referred to as the clerici sancte marie<sup>3</sup>. These terms can only, it seems, refer to boys serving in some capacity - probably simply as altar-boys - at daily Lady Mass in the Lady Chapel. This composite entry appears on the next Almoner's account, that for 1395/6<sup>4</sup>, and regularly thereafter, but mention of the 'boys of the blessed virgin' does not occur in it again. Whether this was because the Almonry boys ceased to serve at Lady Mass, or because the Almoner ceased to buy them wine, or did so without recording them among its recipients on his account, cannot now be determined.

From the attendance of boys at Lady Mass to serve the priest, one more step could be taken - that of having the boys participate in the music of the service. This was a far more complicated step to take than any other, since it necessarily involved the recruitment of somebody qualified to teach the boys their parts.

Monasteries where small Lady Chapel choirs of secular clerks already existed were well placed in this respect, for there one of the clerks could undertake this function. Certainly, the opportunity was taken up at Worcester, where the Custos Capelle accounts do record the

- 
1. EDC Custos Capelle 8:- dat' pueris laborantibus in capella ad missam sancte marie ij s. hoc anno . There are no further Custos Capelle a/cs until 1443/4.
  2. NDC A/c Rolls 498-504.
  3. E.g. NDC A/c Roll 501 (1383/4):- item in vino misso domino priori clericis sancte marie etc. ix s. vj d.
  4. NDC A/c Roll 506.



participation of boys in the nave Lady Chapel services sporadically between 1394 and 1423. Generally, they were referred to as 'boys of the chapel', pueri de (or in) capella; probably they attended services there on a regular basis, but only appeared on the accounts when their participation in the service (the nature of which is almost never described) was of sufficient moment to warrant some special reward being given. The number of boys involved was not large; usually they are mentioned in twos and threes, the maximum being four in 1414/5.<sup>1</sup> The services they performed in chapel were rewarded with small tips in cash, or presents of clothing - usually hose or shoes, but occasionally something more substantial, e.g. a gown or tunic.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, however, the Custos Capelle was not responsible for their complete maintenance in food, shelter and clothing, and it seems impossible to escape the conclusion that these boys were in fact boys from the Almonry school.<sup>3</sup>

The boys' part in the performance of Lady Mass would certainly have included serving the celebrant, but also included singing some parts of the service. To the boys singing in chapel tips totalling 16d. were paid in 1415/6 and 4d. in 1417/8.<sup>4</sup> One boy's participation in improvised polyphony is indicated by an entry on the account for 1414/5:- "reward given to T[homas] Hulot singing plainsong and (?) descant in the chapel on occasions 2s.; also to three other boys singing there on occasions 20d."<sup>5</sup> Only one record of a payment to one of the clerks for instructing the boys has come to light; in 1394/5 John Ylleway received a gratuity of 2s. 9d. for this, on top of his salary as a clerk.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond the mere fact of the participation of boys with the clerks in the ritual and the music of the daily Lady Mass, the information available enables little to be said. As has been noticed, this fashion for emphasising the presence of boys at divine service was generally

- 
1. 2 in 1394/5 (WorDC C252), 2 in 1395/6 ("little Parys" and the son of Thomas Synger) (C253), 1 in 1396/7 (Parys) (C254), 3 in 1402/3 (C258), 1 in 1408/9 (Thomas Hulot)(C261), Thomas Hulot and 3 other boys in 1414/5 (C267), boys unnumbered in 1415/6 and 1417/8 (C268-9) and one in 1421/2 and 1422/3 (C272a, 272).
  2. e.g. WorDC C258 (1402/3) In xv virgis panni pro iij clericis et iij pueris in Capella predicta xxiiij s. viij d. ...In iij superpellicis pro iij pueris iij s. iij d. Item in j pare caligarum et iij paribus sotularium pro pueris xvj d....
  3. The schoolboys are mentioned on the Almoner's accounts for 1380/1, 1397/8, 1398, 1409/10, 1426/7 and regularly thereafter: WorDC C176, 183, 184, 189, 193. Most of the later references to Almonry boys were spotted, and printed by A.F. Leach, Documents illustrating early education in Worcester pp. xlvii-
  4. WorDC C268-9. liv, 23-117 passim.
  5. WorDC C267:- In rewardis datis T hulot cantanti et organizanti in capella per vices ij s. Item iij aliis pueris cantantibus ibidem per vices xxd.
  6. WorDC C252:- In stipendio Johannis Ylleway per annum xxvjs. viij d. In curialitate data eidem ad informandum pueros de Capella ijs ix d.

only short-lived, and it appears to have been no more persevered with at Worcester than anywhere else. The last reference to a boy of the chapel occurs in 1422/3; thereafter, although accounts survive for every year up to 1437 (excepting 1430-34), no mention of them appears again. The contribution which the boys had made had been neither musically nor liturgically indispensable, and had now fulfilled its purpose; thenceforth, the music of the chapel could again be left in the hands of the singing-men alone.

(d) Second generation Lady Chapel choirs (c.1400 onwards)

Basically the Worcester Lady Chapel choir consisted of the permanent staff of three clerks, to which boys could be added or not as fashion dictated. Almonry boys were readily available, and the clerks were there to act as instructors of the boys. At other monasteries, where there was no established Lady Chapel choir of lay clerks, the creation of a Lady Chapel choir of boys had to be undertaken much more decisively. An Instructor had to be employed, and added to the monastery's staff of lay servants - his usual title was Cantor. Also in order to make the employment of a skilled musician at all worthwhile, the participation of a choir of boys had to be established as a regular daily feature of the performance of the music of Lady Mass, rather than just an occasional occurrence as the circumstances prevailing at Worcester permitted it to be.

Evidence has so far been found of five major monasteries where such Lady Chapel choirs, consisting of a single adult Cantor and a team of singing boys, were established during the first 20 years of the 15th century:- Winchester (1402), Ely (by 1407), Durham (1414), Glastonbury (by 1420) and Abingdon (by 1420). It was a type of choir which evidently filled some devotional need deeper than a mere dictate of fashion. Those that were created flourished until the monasteries themselves were dissolved;<sup>1</sup> and the establishment of more of them

---

1. At monasteries which became cathedrals or colleges of the New Foundation, the cantor of the Lady Chapel choir became one of the lay clerks, and the boys became the choristers, of the new secular establishment.

continued even after the fad for multiplying choristers had otherwise died down. A Lady Chapel choir of a Master and 8 boys was established at Christ Church, Canterbury, in c.1439, and one of a Master and 6 boys at Bridlington Priory in 1447.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the century, there is evidence for their existence at a fair proportion of the greater Benedictine and Augustinian monasteries in England.

A picture of the duties and functions of the Cantor and his boys may best be built up from the surviving indentures of appointment. The earliest such document known is that whereby the prior and convent of Winchester appointed John Tyes as their Cantor for a period of 20 years at Michaelmas 1402.<sup>2</sup> His duties of attending at service in the monks' choir on festivals and on all occasions when polyphonic music was to be sung have already been considered.<sup>3</sup> In addition he was "well and faithfully to serve the prior and convent at the daily Lady Mass celebrated at her altar, both in singing and playing the organ"; and agreed that he would "teach the boys of the prior and convent in chant, as often as they shall have been assigned to him, provided that at any one time they shall not exceed four in number." For these duties Tyes received annually £5. 6. 8d. in cash, a gown, a room at the provision of the prior and convent, and the right to join the prior's household for dinner at the busy times of his year, and on all days when he had been singing polyphony in the monks' choir.

Thus Tyes' principal daily duty was to play the organ and sing at Lady Mass, and although the indenture (which is ambiguous at a couple of points) does not expressly say so, it seems probable that it was for this service that he was to teach his boys to participate in the singing. Two years later (16 August 1404) the prior and convent agreed with their bishop, William Wykham, that (amongst other devotions for the welfare of his soul) each evening thenceforth the almonry boys should gather at Wykham's chantry chapel in the nave of the cathedral and there sing, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, the Marian antiphons Salve Regina or Ave Regina [celorum] with the psalm De profundis, and appropriate prayers.<sup>4</sup> Tyes' singing boys, therefore, were likely to have been four boys selected as most suitable from the

1. See below, pp. 5032-4, 5036-44.

2. WinDC, Priory Register I (1345-1496) fo.15v.; transcribed as Appendix C1 below, p. A054

3. See above, pp. 4071-2.

4. WinDC Priory Register I (1345-1496) fo.18v.

Almonry boys; it would have been the presence among the Almonry boys of boys<sup>already</sup> trained in singing that made Wykham's request practicable in the first place.

There seems to be every reason for identifying this John Tyes<sup>1</sup> with the J. Tyes who contributed to the Old Hall Manuscript a three-part isorhythmic setting of Gloria and a four-part Sanctus<sup>2</sup>; though whether they were composed originally to be sung at Winchester by himself and two or three of the more competent monks is now impossible to say.

How long Tyes actually remained at Winchester is not known. A tradition that the monastery should employ a secular musician from outside the monastery at least to lead and direct the monks' singing and to play the organ in choir, was certainly continued after he left<sup>3</sup>; but no further reference to the Lady Chapel choir can be found earlier than 1482.<sup>4</sup>

At Ely, as has already been seen, the occasional participation at Lady Mass of visiting lay singers and of boys was already established by 1384<sup>5</sup>. Although the evidence is extremely tenuous, it would appear that by 1407 at least, the priory had - as at Winchester - inaugurated a policy of employing a permanent secular Cantor from outside the monastery community, amongst whose duties was that of directing a team of boys to attend and sing at daily Lady Mass. At the times of the great Ely festivals, this choir was augmented by outside singers either hired for the occasion, or coming of their own accord to take advantage of the Indulgences offered to pilgrims on the festivals of St. Etheldreda.

No surviving account roll mentions any Cantor until the Cellarer's Roll of 1409/10, which records the payment of 9 months' stipend to Nicholas the Cantor.<sup>6</sup> Almost certainly, however, two earlier entries translated and printed by Stevenson from the Precentor's accounts now lost also refer to this Nicholas the cantor:-

- 
1. So far in musicological literature his name has always been printed as Dyes. However his name appears perfectly clearly as Tyes on his indenture, and elsewhere on the obedientiary accounts of the priory - see G.W. Kitchin, Compotus Rolls... pp.442,443, 449 etc.
  2. ed. M. Bent and A. Hughes, The Old Hall Manuscript, vol.1, pp.32,369.
  3. see the reference to Robert Bygbroke, c.1435, below, Chapter 5, p. 5031.
  4. WinDC, Priory Register I (1345-1496) fo.106v.
  5. See above pp. 4077, 4086-7.
  6. EDC Cellarer 29:- Stipendia Famulorum.... in Stipendio Nicholai cantoris pro iij quarteriis anni ijs vjd.

"1407 Nicholas Stokes teaching the Precentor's clerk  
to play upon the organ, for one year, 30s.;  
1409 The Chanter teaching the boys <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of a year 10s." <sup>1</sup>

From 1407 onwards, the priory constantly maintained a permanent lay cantor on its staff. Once they have been distinguished from others who are designated 'Cantor' on the accounts, but who were in fact only visiting singers attending on purely a temporary basis at the greater festivals, a list of Nicholas Stokes' successors can be traced with very few breaks down through the 15th century as far as 1490. The permanent Cantor was in receipt of an annual salary composed of small sums contributed from the funds of many of the obedientiaries of the priory, and it is from their accounts that the list of 15th century Cantors can be compiled.<sup>2</sup>

No indentures of appointment appear to survive among the Ely archives, and the precise duties of the Cantor at Ely remain exceedingly obscure. It is probable that, like John Tyes at Winchester, he was expected to play the organ and sing in the monks' choir on festivals - indeed, on one account he was referred to not just as Cantor, but as 'Cantor in choro'<sup>3</sup>. However, it is probable that the sphere of his duties lay primarily in the Lady Chapel, for it was from the Warden of the Lady Chapel that he drew the largest single contribution to his salary, 13s. 4d. His title makes it clear that his duties were concerned with music, and especially with singing; most probably therefore he was concerned mostly with directing the singing at daily Lady Mass.

Also, from the start, he had a team of boys under his direction; in 1409 the Precentor paid 10s. to "The Chanter teaching the boys <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of a year!"<sup>4</sup> Routine participation in the Lady Mass presumably brought the boys no special reward; however, when the Custos Capelle accounts resume in 1443/4 they record occasional presents, or payments of money to the boys for some special contribution to the singing of

- 
1. W. Stevenson, A Supplement... p.51. This Nicholas Stokes may perhaps be identifiable with the dom Nicholas Stoke who was singer, and clerk [? of the chapel] of the Earl of Warwick in 1392:- see above, p. 4084.
  2. This list appears below as Appendix B5, p. A052.
  3. EDC Granator 31 (1435/6):- ffrumentum ... dat' Thome Pencrich cantore [sic] in choro ex convencione iij bus'.
  4. W. Stevenson, A Supplement... p.51. Presumably in the original:- Cantori pro erudicione puerorum pro tribus quarteriis anni x s.

Lady Mass in the chapel<sup>1</sup>. The Cantor and his boys received a small gift of 6d. from the Treasurer in 1473/4<sup>2</sup>; while in 1490 John Alcock, bishop of Ely, put on record his appreciation of Cantor Richard Holmes' services 'to us and to our cathedral church of Ely ... in participating in divine service, and in teaching the boys of the chapel'.<sup>3</sup> This evidence is sufficient to make it clear that the cantor was responsible for training a team of boys to sing and take part in Lady Mass, and perhaps other votive devotions in the Lady Chapel.

Of the music sung in the chapel, the archives preserve no record at all. As at Worcester, at least one organ was kept in the Lady Chapel. A new instrument was made in 1367 for the chapel at a cost of 53s. 4d.<sup>4</sup>; an organ in the chapel was repaired in 1452/3 at a cost of sixpence.<sup>5</sup> At no time whatever is there any indication that the Lady Chapel choir was composed of anything more than just the Cantor and a few boys. No permanent lay-clerks were ever recorded, nor was there ever more than just one Cantor.<sup>6</sup> However, visiting singers continued to be made welcome at services in the Lady Chapel on great festivals, particularly those of St. Etheldreda, to bulk out the small resident choir.

- 
1. e.g. EDC Custos Capelle 9 (1443/4):- Et in xij paribus cultellorum emptis et datis pueris cantantibus ad missam beate Marie xvij d. Custos Capelle 13 (1478/9):- Dat' inter pueros per vices ibidem [in capella sc.] cantantes xiiij d.
  2. EDC Treasurer 14:- dat' Harington et pueris eius vjd. Richard Harington was Cantor from 1469 until 1484. Other similar entries on the accounts have been collected by S.J.A. Evans, "Ely Almonry boys and Choristers" in ed. J.C.Davies, Studies presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, p.155
  3. ...in divinis officiis exercendo ac eciam pueros de capella docendo. Liber B, EDC G/2/3 fo.105r.
  4. W.Stevenson, A Supplement..., (quoting from an account of the Custos Capelle for 1367 now no longer extant), p.67, fn.2.
  5. EDC Custos Capelle A/c 10.
  6. The precentor's a/c for 1483/4 (EDC Precentor 9) records the payment of stipendia to two Cantors:- 9s. 4d. to Richard Harington and 1s. 4d. to William Reede. However, this is the last year in which Harington's name occurs as Cantor; probably Reede succeeded him half-way through the fourth term of the year, Harington receiving  $\frac{7}{8}$  of the Precentor's contribution of 10s. 8d. p.a. to the Cantor's salary, and Reede  $\frac{1}{8}$ .

The establishment of a Lady Chapel choir at Durham Cathedral Priory was an event which required two stages for its completion, both due almost certainly to the initiative of Thomas Langley, bishop of Durham 1406-37. In June-July 1414 he had two of his agents found for him a chantry of two secular priests in Durham Cathedral. Until Langley built a new Lady Chapel there, the two priests were to celebrate Mass daily in honour of the Blessed Virgin and St. Cuthbert at the existing altar of St. Mary in the Cathedral. The two chaplains were to be sufficiently instructed to keep school, one in grammar and the other in song, in buildings yet to be assigned by the bishop. Two school-houses, una scilicet grammaticalis, altera musicalis, were shortly afterwards built on the Palace Green - outside the precincts of the monastery, between the Cathedral and the bishop's Castle.

Langley apparently intended his grammar-school and song-school to function in a manner almost exactly similar to those at Warwick.<sup>1</sup> As well as saying his own chantry-mass there, the chaplain teaching the song-school was bound to be present and to sing each day at the (monastic) Lady Mass sung at the Lady altar in the Cathedral - or in the Lady Chapel when built - with a sufficient number of his scholars, evidently to sing at the mass under his direction. This, however, would hardly keep one chaplain and, say, half a dozen boys adequately occupied for a whole working day; and as at Warwick, it is clear that the song school was not run solely for this purpose. The masters of both the grammar school and the song school were to instruct all willing to learn and study under them, the poor freely, but "taking from those who by themselves or their friends are willing to pay, the moderate fees accustomed to be paid in other grammar or song schools". Since Langley's foundation paid each chaplain only £2 p.a. each, such fees would be very necessary. The song school therefore was to be open to all comers, and probably - as at Warwick - was intended to serve as a school preparatory to grammar school. The chaplain teaching the grammar school needed attend Lady Mass only on Sundays and double feasts.<sup>2</sup>

1. See above, pp. 4016-7, and Appendix A5, pp. A020-5.

2. CPR 1413-16, pp.206-7; ed. J. Raine, Historiae Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres pp.146-7; A.F. Leach, The Schools of Medieval England pp.239-40; B. Crosby, "The Song School at Durham", 60 Durham University Journal (1968), p.63.

Thus did bishop Langley arrange for the daily Lady Mass at Durham to be enhanced by the presence of a Cantor, in this case a secular priest, and a team of singing-boys. Attending Lady Mass and saying his own chantry-mass were nominally the Cantor's only duties within the monastery precinct. However, as indicated above, Durham was one cathedral priory where some concern to maintain the singing of polyphonic music in the monks' choir was still retained.<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that coincident with the appearance on the Durham scene of a skilled musician, there was a sudden flurry of activity, recorded on the obedientiaries' accounts, indicating that the Cantor was promptly drawn into the musical side of the monks' services in the choir of the Cathedral church as well. In just one year, 1416/7, William the Cantor<sup>2</sup> was paid sums of money for teaching the young monks both to chant and play the organ, and probably also to sing polyphony, since in the same year the feretrar paid 2s. 6d. to the (unnamed) 'master of the singers of polyphony'. Three further successive feretrar's accounts recorded payments to the Cantor teaching the monks (1418/9), to the Cantor singing polyphony in choir (1419/20), and to the Cantor singing polyphony (1420/1).<sup>3</sup>

This sudden appearance of a Cantor in the priory's archives, at precisely the moment at which Langley was establishing his chantry and song-school, seems unlikely to be pure coincidence. Taken together, Langley's chantry-priest and the priory's Cantor add up to a figure with functions remarkably similar to those of John Tyes, and after him Robert Bygbroke, at Winchester. What can not have been so easy, however, was for the Cantor to do all this, and still serve as a chantry-priest and public elementary school master at the same time. And so, just as at Warwick, so also at Durham such a means of supplying the church with the services of a Cantor was found to be impractical, and was not persevered with.

---

1. See above, p. 4072.

2. One of the original Langley chaplains, named on the Letters Patent of 1414, was Mr. William Brown: CPR 1413-16, p.206

3. ed. J.T. Fowler, Extracts from the account rolls..., pp.226,406,287, 460, 462. How long these payments continued to be made can only be determined by reference to the original rolls; repetitive entries were calendared out of these printed "Extracts..."



About the year 1430, Langley began to build a new Lady Chapel at the Cathedral - or rather, to convert the existing Galilee porch to both a Lady Chapel and his own tomb and chantry.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he undertook a thorough revision of the existing arrangements for the singing of Lady Mass. The practice of entrusting the direction of this to a priest, whose principal function was that of teaching an elementary school, with some of his pupils, was now abandoned. Rather, Langley adopted the prevailing fashion of employing a lay expert musician, just to train and direct a team of singing boys for Lady Mass, and to take in hand the singing in the monks' choir.

The prior and convent hired their first lay Cantor, John Stele, on 22 December 1430.<sup>2</sup> His annual salary was £3. 6. 8d., plus free board and livery for himself, and a rent-free house close to the monastery for himself and Isabella his wife. Stele's duties in return for this were as follows:-

(1) The prior was to assign to him certain monks of the priory and eight secular boys. These he was, diligently and in the best manner he knew, to teach both to play the organ and to sing polyphonic music, namely prick-song (composed polyphony), faburden, descant and counter, concealing nothing of these sciences from them.<sup>3</sup>

(2) Stele was to be present in person at mass and vespers celebrated in the monks' choir of the cathedral church, "when he shall have been duly required to do so", playing the organ there if necessary, and "singing the polyphonic tenor to the cantus aforesaid".<sup>4</sup> In this context, it may be presumed that "when duly required to do so" means, basically, "on festivals". The "cantus aforesaid" can, it seems, refer only to the various techniques of polyphonic singing listed in the section immediately previous. That is, the monks taught by Stele became the choir's "organiste"; when they performed polyphonic renderings of the chants at Mass or vespers, Stele was to be there with them, directing and singing the tenor. The provision of a

- 
1. ed. J.T.Fowler, The Rites of Durham, pp.43,232; plan in MMB pp.188-9, showing Lady altar, Langley's tomb, and stalls for Lady Chapel choir.
  2. Durham, Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter:- Priory Register III fo.137v., Transcribed as Appendix C3 below, p. A056.
  3. ...idem Johannes illos Monachos Dunelmenses et octo pueros seculares, quos prior Dunelmensis assignaverit sibi ad discendum, diligenter et meliori modo quo sciverit tam ad modulandum super organa quam ad organum decantandum scilicet Pryktenote ffaburdon deschaunte et counter quantum in ipso est informabit....:- ibid. This would appear to be the earliest recorded occurrence of the terms 'pryktenote' (for 'prick-song') and faburden.
  4. ...modulando ibidem super organa si necesse fuerit, tenoremque canendo organicum ad cantus supranominatos. ibid.

single voice to sing the tenor appears to confirm that these forms of polyphonic performance, of both composed and improvised polyphony, were considered as music for soloists.

(3) Every day, Stele was to be present at the sung Lady Mass celebrated in the Galille Lady Chapel, singing plainsong or improvised polyphony at the mass "just as it shall have occasioned others to sing there"<sup>1</sup>. This apparently was a reference to whatever custom had been established by Stele's predecessors as Cantors at Lady Mass. Although the indenture does not explicitly say so, it seems probable that it was for the daily Lady Mass that Stele was to train his eight boys. Who these eight boys were is not clear from any contemporary evidence; but the author of the "Rites of Durham", recalling <sup>in the 1590's</sup> the customs ~~in the 1590's~~ of the priory immediately prior to its Dissolution, considered these singing boys to have been a subdivision of the boys of the Almonry grammar school.<sup>2</sup>

Thus did the prior and convent take advantage of the availability of lay expertise in directing the music of the services both in the monks' choir and in the Lady Chapel, producing in John Stele's indenture the clearest statement surviving from this early period of the duties of Cantor and Master of the Lady Chapel choir at a great Benedictine monastery.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that the married layman John Stele was taking over all the duties within the priory of Langley's song school master - except, of course, that of priest of the Langley chantry.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, no accounts of the Langley chantry chapel appear to have survived, so there is no evidence from which can be drawn any picture of how these arrangements worked out in practice.

- 
1. ...canendo ad eandem missam planum cantum sive organum sicut contigerit alios ibidem cantare. ibid. There was an organ in the Galilee Lady Chapel by 1438/9:- ed. J.T. Fowler, Extracts from the Account Rolls, p.73 et seq.
  2. ed. J.T. Fowler, The Rites of Durham, pp.43-4, 62
  3. After the death of Mrs. Stele, the indenture was re-drafted and re-issued in 1448; it is printed complete in ed. J. Raine, Historiae Dunelmensis Scriptorum Tres, p. cccxv.
  4. Langley's chantry arrangements otherwise remained intact; his two chantry priests continued to be appointed until the chantry was dissolved under the terms of the Chantries etc. Act of 1547. The Chantry certificate appears in A.f. Leach, English Schools at the Reformation, part ii, p.60. As might be expected, however, the appointment of Stele as lay Cantor of the priory in 1430 evidently caused the song school master's duty of attendance, with some of his pupils, at Lady Mass to lapse completely. Consequently, c.1440 a new arrangement was devised, whereby the song school master was required to put in just token appearances at Lady Mass on principal and double feasts - i.e. just the same as the grammar school master:- B. Crosby, "The Song School at Durham", 60 Durham University Journal (1968), pp.65-6

For the existence of other Lady Chapel choirs founded in the first two decades of the 15th century, reliance has to be placed on mere chance references.<sup>1</sup> There seems to be an indication that singing-boys were employed at both Glastonbury and Abingdon abbeys by 1420/1 in the following entry from the account of the Keeper of the Common Chest at Abingdon:- 'In gratuities given to Richard Wetnall, cantor present here for half the year, 33s. 4d. In expenses incurred concerning two singing boys, namely on clothes and other things necessary for them, together with gratuities given to the secretary of the Duke of Gloucester, to have a letter of him to the abbot of Glastonbury for the delivery of these boys, 53s. 4d.'<sup>2</sup> At Abingdon, the presence of a Cantor and singing boys indicates perhaps that a Lady Chapel choir on roughly the Ely model had been established there.<sup>3</sup> In this case, the John Sodbury 'Cantor in Ecclesia' mentioned on an account of 1440/1 would be one of Richard Wetnall's successors.<sup>4</sup> The presence of singing boys at Glastonbury<sup>5</sup> may well be an indication of the reaching of a major stage in the transformation of the choir in the Lady Chapel there, from the small-scale college of chantry - priests established in 1333<sup>6</sup> to the full polyphonic choir of lay-clerks and boys revealed by the accounts of the abbey for the last full year of its existence, 1538/9.<sup>7</sup>

- 
1. In 1399 a secular stipendiary choir was established in the Lady Chapel of Westminster Abbey:- H.F. Westlake, Westminster Abbey p.346. The extensive surviving collection of obedientary rolls, especially of the Custos Capelle, will undoubtedly make this the best documented of all Lady Chapel choirs, but so far these muniments have not been explored.
  2. ed. R.E.G. Kirk, Accounts of the Obedientiaries of Abingdon Abbey, p.90
  3. It is not clear whether or not there was an Almonry school at Abingdon Abbey. A single Almoner's a/c survives, that for 1390/1 (BRO D/EP 7/140); a payment of 2s.10d. in festo Sancti Nicholai may well indicate the residence of boys in the Almonry, but there is no entry more explicit than this.
  4. ed. R.E.G. Kirk, Accounts of the Obedientiaries...p.121
  5. There was a flourishing school at Glastonbury of some 40 pupils in 1377:- PRO E 179 4/1 mm.8-9.
  6. See above p. 4078, n. 1.
  7. PRO SC 6 Henry VIII 3118; also Henry VIII 3114 and E 135 2/31.

Another early Lady Chapel choir may have been the one established at Hyde Abbey, just outside Winchester. In 1492 prior Walter Enford reported to a visitation that he had been admitted to the abbey in the time of abbot Nicholas Strowde (1415-40), and claimed that 'by a custom used ab antiquo Abbot Strowde had provided that fourteen pueri should abide in the said place daily to sing in the morning a mass of the Blessed Virgin in the chapel, and after to attend the grammar school (grammaticae scolam frequentarent)". Enford's complaint was that by 1492 this provision had been allowed to lapse.<sup>1</sup> There seems to be here some indication of the running of an Almonry school<sup>2</sup>, and the employment of its pupils as singing boys at Lady Mass, the custom being apparently an established one even before Abbot Strowde regularised it in some way.<sup>3</sup>

However, not every abbot who decided on the employment of lay singers to assist his monastery in rendering the musical service opted for the single adult Cantor, plus a team of boys to sing in the Lady Chapel. For reasons outlined above, John Wheathamstead, abbot of St. Alban's, was particularly keen on raising the standard of singing at divine service, lest he lose any more talented monks to other monasteries.<sup>4</sup> Shortly before leaving for the Council of Pavia, 1423, he drew up instructions under which two stipendiary singers were to be hired to sing in the Abbey Church with the monks, whenever the Convent was not self-sufficient in skilful singers from amongst its own members. Each day, these were to attend at Mass in the Lady Chapel, and on Sundays and festivals at High Mass and Vespers in the monks' choir as well.<sup>5</sup> Evidently Wheathamstead did not want a permanent team of lay singers to serve the Lady Chapel as at Worcester; his desire was merely to strengthen the monks' singing on a temporary basis, just whenever the monastery was weak in its own resources.

Arguably, these Lady Chapel choirs, consisting of a Cantor and a team of boys, are hardly worth the labour required for this elucidation of their early history. Musically they were of little significance; they appear to have left no music designed for performance by their particular type of forces, and it seems unlikely that they ever attempted anything more ambitious than just the plainsong of the

1. C. Jenkins, "Cardinal Morton's Register" in ed. R.W. Seton-Watson, Tudor Studies presented to A.F. Pollard, p.54.

2. as suggested by D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol.2, p.296.

3. There is no mention of a Cantor in Enford's complaint, but under the circumstances no mention need have been necessary; the ground of his complaint may merely have been the loss of patronage rights in the presentation of the Almonry boys, rather than any musical loss.

4. See above pp. 4073-4.

5. ed. H.T. Riley, Annales Monasterii Sancti Albani, vol.1, pp.106-7

ordinary and proper of the Lady Mass, enhanced when possible by the singing of descant improvised over the plainsong according to the standard rules.

However, their existence was not without significance for the future, especially in one particular aspect of the Cantor's work. The Cantor served not only as the trainer of the singing-boys; he was also employed to assist the monks in the performances of the music of the monks' choir, and this second side of his work required that he be a skilled musician. Now prior to this, the only singing boys in existence had been those of the secular institutions, and their training had necessarily fallen to some member of the foundation whose talents were not primarily musical at all, but were for teaching plainsong, reading, the ceremonial of the liturgy, and Latin grammar - the whole ambit of a chorister's work in a secular institution. It was in the context of these monastic Lady Chapel choirs that the training of boys' voices first fell to the lot not of a general pedagogue, but of a skilled musician per se. His teaching was purely musical; the ceremonial of Lady Mass changed little through the year, and needed little learning - while for the boys' grammar education, the Almonry school had its own grammar master.

For the first time, therefore, this circumstance brought the musical possibilities of the use of boys' voices to the notice of the kind of men who composed polyphonic music. These circumstances multiplied in frequency over the next two generations, as they began to occur to secular institutions also; and as, by chance, the notation of mensural music contemporaneously grew simpler, it was inevitable that it would eventually occur to someone to broaden the sonority and expressive scope of composed polyphonic music by writing for a mixed choir of boys' and men's voices. This was a departure which, when it occurred c.1460, would have numerous consequences both for the development of music itself, and for the composition of the choirs which performed it.

#### 4.7. The cultivation of polyphonic music.

The composition and performance of polyphonic settings of various parts of the liturgy was one of the features of contemporary devotional practice singled out for special condemnation by the Lollard polemicists. This very fact made it probable that the promotion of this style of composition and performance would form an integral part of the enthusiastic reaction which Lollardy produced; and there are indeed a number of respects in which just such a deliberate cultivation of polyphonic setting of suitable parts of the liturgy and its appurtenances does seem to be observable at this period. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that the promotion of polyphonic music for the liturgy had to operate within a field of applicability which was clearly defined and limited in contemporary values and opinion:-

...ritual plainsong was the staple fare of the medieval musician, the material of his musical education, and the basis of his professional qualifications. The place of polyphony among the liturgical arts of poetry, music, ceremonial, vestment and ornament cannot be seen in its true proportion apart from the order and forms of the liturgy. ...Viewed as a whole, the liturgy had a devotional function and a didactic purpose which resembled and complemented those of the buildings in which it had its place. As the Gothic cathedral was both 'a strictly architectural monument of the spirit of its age' and a 'Summa, another Speculum, an encyclopaedia carved in stone',<sup>1</sup> so the yearly cycle of the liturgy was both a Gesamt-kunstwerk of the liturgical arts and an aural and visual representation of Christian doctrine and history. The place of polyphony in this union of the liturgical arts and crafts is analogous to that of the finer carving of an image, a chantry chapel, a choir-stall or a fan-vault in the Speculum which was the medieval cathedral.<sup>2</sup>

It was as an extra enhancement, therefore, as a decoration for a body of liturgical music and ceremony already of monumental elaboration, that

---

1. N. Pevsner, An outline of European architecture (1953), p.79

2. MMB, pp.xiv-xv.

polyphony was cultivated. Polyphonic performances of liturgical or devotional texts could, therefore, be contemplated only in those certain contexts where this particular means of elaborating the service seemed appropriate. Principally this related to occasions rendered important or festal either by the ordinary progress of the cycle of feasts of the church's year, or by some other particular feature of the day or of the service. Within these parameters, a considerable flowering in the cultivation of polyphonic music can be observed at this period.

As its potential for enabling men to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" became increasingly appreciated, founders began to express in explicit terms the requirement that both the adult and boy members of the choral staffs of major colleges be able to sing at least improvised polyphony. The statutes of Stoke-by-Clare college, compiled by 1423, appear to be the earliest to make this requirement explicit; the eight Vicars and two clerici maiores all were required to be knowledgeable in descant, and it was also among the subjects to be taught to the choristers.<sup>1</sup>

At the more prominent collegiate churches, sums of money began to be set by for the making of substantial manuscripts of composed polyphonic music. In June 1417 the precentor of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, paid out 6s. 3d. for 15 skins of vellum to make a book called an 'organboke'. The manuscript was to be of considerable size. Each skin made four folios; three skins made a gathering, and as the purchase provided for a book of five gatherings, a volume of 60 folios was the result.<sup>2</sup> In April 1416 vermilion (paint or dye) had been bought for illuminating the books of polyphony which the Chapel already possessed.<sup>3</sup> Certain smaller colleges, also, owned books of polyphonic music; William Witney, who had left the college's service by 1424<sup>4</sup>, gave to St. Mary's Warwick 'j Organ book bounde with bordes of Witneys yeft [gift] of parchemyn having a quayer of paper prikked in the begynnyng'<sup>5</sup>. At an institution such as Salisbury Cathedral,

1. PRO E 135 3/50 ff.9r., 11v.

2. WndDC xv 56 23 - Et in xv pellibus de velym emptis in Wyndesore pro uno libro vocato Organboke continente v quaternos quolibet qua eruo iij pell' viz xij fol' vj s. iij d. This would produce a book about half the size of the Old Hall Manuscript.

3. WndDC xv 56 22 - In vermylony empt' pro libris organ[icis] eliminandis [over limitandis lined out, sic ?for illuminandis] ij d.

4. In 1424 the tenement which Witney had leased in 1409 (PRO E 164 22 fo.208v) was described as that 'in quo W Witteney manebat' (ibid., fo.35v.)

5. PRO E 154 1/46.

however, of the renderings of music that departed in any way from the authorised plainsong and were sung instead in polyphony, there survives only the sarcastic reaction of some choleric canon who complained at the visitation of 1418 that the vicars choral sang 'Balades and cantilenas' at the services.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the household chapels of the King and the greater aristocrats that there were available to the greatest degree both the personnel and the opportunities for cultivating the performance of composed polyphonic music. At this level, it had, by c.1415, become established as a regular feature of divine worship - a routine daily observance in its simpler forms, a festal decoration in its more elaborate and complex styles.

The evidence that this was so is supplied by the single most impressive item to survive from this whole period of burgeoning musical activity, the Old Hall Manuscript.<sup>2</sup> Opinion as to the date of the compilation of this manuscript appears at last to have hardened. It seems that the main body of its contents was being gathered and arranged, and the manuscript compiled, during the years 1410-1415; and that the additional items entered into it later had all been executed by c.1420 at the latest.<sup>3</sup> Even in its present incomplete state, it still contains some 145 pieces of music of English origin for use at mass, composed between c.1370 and c.1420; indeed, it has been plausibly argued, from the high proportion of concordances with surviving fragments of other manuscripts of this period, that it represents an attempt to create a representative anthology of the whole repertoire of English music of its type then current. In the general prevailing atmosphere of encouragement for the cultivation of polyphonic music at this period, it seems entirely probable that such a venture could have been conceived, undertaken and executed at this particular time. As a further product of the character of the times, the names of those who composed polyphonic music were now considered worthy of esteem and record; in the original layer of the manuscript are preserved the names of 18 English composers, and among the later additions, those of four more. The

- 
1. SDC Reg. Pounteney, fo.53r.:— item detectum est et Compertum quod vicarii chorales antedicti cantant Balades et cantelenas in eorum serviciis divinis.
  2. Modern edition in M. Bent and A. Hughes, The Old Hall Manuscript, 46 Corpus Musicae Mensurabilis (1969).
  3. All the information concerning the Old Hall Manuscript has been derived from the edition referred to above; and from A. Hughes and M. Bent, "The Old Hall Manuscript", 21 Musica Disciplina (1967) p.97, and M. Bent, "Sources of the Old Hall music", 94 Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association (1967/8), p.19



manuscript contains mostly settings of movements of the Mass, a few motets and some Marian antiphons; roughly half the settings of Sanctus and Agnus are on ferial chants, making possible the performance of polyphonic music at Mass on every day of the year.

It is not known for which institution the Manuscript was originally compiled; it does, however, seem that only the most prominent chapel establishments could realistically have had such a compilation undertaken, and could have afforded the expense of its luxurious style of production. The political allusions in the texts of certain of the motets suggest its use in the household chapel of some very prominent magnate, intimately concerned with England's diplomacy and wars in the second decade of the 15th century. Considering that some 20 of the ascribed works in the original part of the manuscript were by Lionel Power, the household chapel of Thomas, duke of Clarence, of which Lionel was a member throughout the 1418-21 period, may be considered a plausible candidate.<sup>1</sup> What is certain, however, is that at some point in the latter half of the decade, the manuscript came into the hands of the members of Henry 5's chapel royal. Of the 30 pieces added to its original contents, 23 were by just four men, all of them chaplains of the chapel royal - Sturgeon, Damett, Burell and Cook. Whoever the manuscript was intended for, therefore, it seems most likely that it was actually used by the Chapel Royal.

Of the 22 English composers named in the manuscript, only 11 have been identified with any conviction.<sup>2</sup> Of these, Aleyn, Gervays and J. Excetre were active in the Chapel Royal before 1400 - Gervays only briefly, being associated also with St. Paul's Cathedral and St. George's

- 
1. In support of this idea, Dr. Margaret Bent has pointed out to me a Gloria-Credo pair (nos. 24 and 84), of which the Gloria (anonymous) is based on the antiphon Ad Thome from the Office of St. Thomas of Canterbury, while the Credo (ascribed to Lionel Power) is based on the antiphon Opem nobis from the same office; and the motet Carbunculus ignitus, the first of a small group of isorhythmic motets at the end of the manuscript, which has a votive text to St. Thomas of Canterbury. This prominence afforded to St. Thomas is, to say the least, consistent with the suggestion that the manuscript was compiled for use by the household chapel of Thomas, duke of Clarence; but, considering the overwhelming position occupied in English devotional life by the memory of St. Thomas of Canterbury, it is only to be expected that any large collection of music would include some items in his honour, and I am disinclined to attach too much weight to this line of argument.
  2. Those unidentified are Byttering, Fonteyns, Forest, Lambe..., Olyver, Pennard, Pycard, Queldryk, Rowland, Swynford and W. Typp. The conventional identifications for Forest (dean of Wells 1425-46) and Typp, (chaplain, Fotheringham College, and Pretentor 1438) having nothing to recommend them, and may be dismissed - or at least, held in suspension until some evidence stronger than the mere coincidence of name comes to light. One composition by Forest, Gaude martir cum triumpho, is based

Windsor; Roy Henry was Henry 4 or Henry 5; Sturgeon, Damett, Burell and Cook were all active members of the Chapel Royal between 1413 and 1419. Indeed, the Chapel Royal contingent is so strong that the list of identified composers in the Old Hall Manuscript gives little evidence of the state of the cultivation and composition of polyphonic music anywhere else. Of three of the non-Chapel Royal composers, one (John Tyes) was lay Cantor and Master of the Lady Chapel choir of Winchester Cathedral Priory in 1402<sup>1</sup>; while another (Lionel Power) was lay-clerk and Master of the Choristers in an aristocratic household chapel in 1418-21. The third, Robert Chirbury, joined the Chapel Royal in January 1420<sup>2</sup>; but of his four compositions in Old Hall, all appear in the earliest layer, completed by c.1415. It is possible that at this time he was connected with St. Paul's Cathedral, London, or some other major church in the diocese of London. He died in the autumn of 1454 as Dean of St. Mary Warwick<sup>3</sup>, and in 1465 that church possessed two missals "not of playn Sar' use but of Powles use corrected in part after Sar', of the yeft of sir Robert Chirbury"<sup>4</sup>. If Chirbury had ever used these missals in their original state, he must have done so at some church in London diocese, and before 1414, the year in which the Use of St. Paul's was discontinued.<sup>5</sup> Considering Gervays' connection with St. Paul's as a minor canon in 1384-86, and the fact that of the six singers of polyphony recruited for the Chapel Royal in October 1419, one, Walter Wodehall, was described as 'one of the singers of polyphony of the cathedral church of St. Paul, London'<sup>6</sup>, it seems probable that St. Paul's was another lively centre of polyphonic composition and performance at this time. However, until the remaining composers are identified, the Old Hall Manuscript cannot give much information about the cultivation of polyphonic music at any institutions other than just the Chapel Royal, and - if Lionel's compositions were written for the institution where he was employed in 1418-21 - the household chapel of Thomas, duke of Clarence.

2. p.4104 contd.

on a plainsong related to the feast of the Deposition of St. Oswald, who was buried in the church of Worcester Cathedral Priory (C.Hamm and A.Scott, "A study and inventory of...Mod B", 26 Musica Disciplina (1972), pp.140-1); a Nicholas Forest<sup>was</sup> a clerk of the Lady Chapel choir at Worcester in 1435 (Custos Capelle A/c, WorDC C279)

1. See above, pp. 4071-2, 90-1.
2. PRO E 403 643 m.16
3. D.Styles, Ministers' Accounts of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary, Warwick. p.18
4. PRO E 154 1/46.
5. MMB p.50 and fn.4
6. PRO E 403 643 m.2:- £5 paid "Waltero Wodehall uni organistarum cathedralis ecclesie sancti Pauli Londoni". The other five were William Thorley, William Dyolet, Richard Lanwarnock, Thomas Wodeford and Gerard Hesyll:- ibid., m.6; E 404 35/247. Hesyll had formerly been chorister (1407) and vicar-choral (1416) of Lincoln Cathedral:- A.R. Maddison, A short account of the vicars choral of Lincoln Cathedral, pp.92,59.

Institutions of this type were characterised by their large numbers of lay clerks; here the presence of expert personnel enabled the singing of polyphonic music - and presumably its composition also - to be considered as a standard item (amongst many others) whereby the ceremony of divine worship could be enhanced, and to which resort could be had as regularly and frequently as seemed appropriate and necessary. In the Old Hall Manuscript could be found settings for use at Mass on any day in the year, from feria to principal feast. It demanded singers who could cope with passages of great rhythmic complexity, who could sing in up to five real parts, and whose mastery of the abstruse science of notation enabled them to derive elaborate canons in up to three parts from a single line of music - all by singing the same notes in different time-signatures. Their large numbers of men skilled in singing polyphonic music (in October 1419 six singers of polyphony were recruited for the Chapel Royal in one go<sup>1</sup>) may already have been tempting the members of some such choirs to attempt to sing certain passages of composed polyphony as a small chorus; thereby, they were creating a new kind of vocal sound to set alongside the sound of the small ensemble of soloists for which polyphony had always been composed before.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. PRO E 403 643 m.6; E 404 35/247.

2. This question is more fully explored below, pp. 5068-81.