

*King's College Chapel 1515–2015: Art, Music and Religion in Cambridge*, edited by Jean Michel Massing and Nicolette Zeeman (London / Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2014; pp. 422)

In 1515, payments ceased to the stonemasons who had created the vaulting of one of England's most extraordinary buildings: the chapel of King's College, Cambridge. Although the stone structure of the chapel was apparently complete by this date (nearly seventy years after King Henry VI laid the first stone), the building remained a shell, its windows being installed between then and the end of Henry VIII's reign; furthermore, liturgical use of the new chapel did not begin until 1537. Thus the building fulfilled the full liturgical and redemptive functions intended by its royal founder for only a few years before the processes of Reformation swept these aside. For most of its history, the chapel stood in unusual physical isolation from its college, and indeed functioned as to some extent a public (rather than merely collegiate) building, both liturgically and as a celebrated attraction for visitors. That public status grew in the last hundred years through the fame of the choir. The present book of essays marks the quincentenary of the chapel, with contributions ranging widely across aspects of its history, fabric, furnishings, decoration, functions, and music, and the ways in which it has been perceived.

The first of the book's three sections concerns the building itself, and opens with a rich survey by Jeremy Musson of aesthetic and architectural responses to the chapel, exploring how perceptions of the building and debates concerning its interior decoration and furnishing (specifically at the East end) reflect both changing fashions and also the acute desires – a measure of the building's special status – to be sensitive to the chapel's architecture. Musson highlights (for example) the manner in which the chapel acted as an inspiration during the nineteenth-century transformations of

Cambridge's collegiate architecture. The history of the East-end schemes, including the controversial 1960s reordering when Rubens's *The Adoration of the Magi* was installed, is considered at some length both here and in Jean Michel Massing's essay on the chapel's altarpieces. Such substantial overlaps of topic (and indeed of material) occur elsewhere in the book also, and might profitably have been obviated by the editors. James Simpson provides a lucid explanation of the representational scheme of the chapel's windows, and Nicola Pickering considers the chantry chapel of Provost Robert Hacumblen. Simpson counterpoints the type of 'hermeneutic culture' represented by the windows with the evangelical environment at the time of their making, although in his conclusions he equivocates about whether that changing climate is reflected in the windows at King's, stating that 'it would be surprising if the powerful and momentous theological currents of 1520–47 did *not* affect the production of the windows' (he mentions instances in which such evidence might be detectable), but then observing: 'that these...windows were in no way affected by the intense currents around them...is...unsurprising'. It might have been valuable for Simpson to set the design of the King's windows in the context of other such typological schemes (relating Old- and New-Testament elements), given that they were commonplace. Similarly, Pickering's study of the Hacumblen chantry could usefully have incorporated contextualisation in terms of chantries of this approximate period and their decorative elements. In discussing Provost Robert Hacumblen's life and activities, Pickering states confidently that he was the composer of a *Salve regina* setting attributed to 'Hacomplaynt' in the Eton Choirbook, while Roger Bowers – in his essay in this collection – argues against the identification of the Provost as the composer. (The illustration in Pickering's chapter purporting to show the piece concerned reproduces the wrong page from the Eton Choirbook, showing a *Salve regina* by Hygons.) The remaining two contributions in this section of the book are

principally technical: John Ochsendorf and Matthew DeJong present an engineering study of the vaulting (much of which will be chiefly of interest to specialist readers), and Stephen Clare surveys the current condition of the windows, setting out conservation recommendations to the College which sit oddly in such a publication; nevertheless, his discussion of stained glass as art and on the glaziers who worked at King's is stimulating.

The second section of the book – with the title 'Life and Visiting' – includes essays by Peter Murray Jones and Nicolette Zeeman which consider respectively the chapel's role within the college and its nature as a more public space. Zeeman's highly stimulating and multifarious account likewise addresses how the building was perceived, as suggested by evidence ranging from the Elizabethan period to the early nineteenth century. Other chapters in this section look beyond the chapel to examine (Iain Fenlon) a manuscript chant book taken in the English raid on Cadiz led by the Earl of Essex in 1596 and presented to King's soon thereafter, and (Ross Harrison) the influential evangelical clergyman and preacher Charles Simeon, who was a fellow of King's.

The choir and organ(s) at King's form the subject of the final section of the book. Following Roger Bowers's commanding survey of the musical establishment and its vicissitudes (reflecting the national religious scene and the degree of support within the college) until its disbanding during the Civil War, the principal focus is on the period from the later nineteenth century to the present, during which the musical prominence of the chapel developed. Nicholas Marston writes evocatively about the liturgical life of the chapel as well as its music during the earlier part (1879-1929) of this period, when the organist was 'Daddy' Mann. In 1918 the newly appointed Dean of King's, Eric Milner-White, inaugurated the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, which became an established fixture of the national celebration of Christmas through

BBC broadcasts from 1928; the service's history is sympathetically traced by Nicholas Nash. Timothy Day considers in engaging fashion the choir's evolution since 1929, including its acquisition of the status of 'touchstone' of choral excellence, although on occasions Day presumes that King's was treated or regarded as archetypal in contexts where that was not necessarily or explicitly the case. Elements of the distinctive and celebrated 'sound of King's' include the organ – the character of which was, as John Butt explores, substantially established in a rebuilding in the 1930s – and the extraordinary acoustics: the Epilogue by Stephen Cleobury and Nicolette Zeeman vividly considers the interactions between space and performance.

Errors include the description of a Matins responsory as a 'repository' (p. 113) and mis-typed dates (e.g. '1654' for '1564', p. 16). Complementing the richness of the essays, this beautifully produced book incorporates a notably rich and imaginative repertoire of illustrations, mostly in colour.

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