

ST STEPHEN'S COLLEGE, WESTMINSTER,

A ROYAL CHAPEL AND ENGLISH KINGSHIP, 1348–1548



ELIZABETH BIGGS

Studies in the History of Medieval Religion

VOLUME L

ST STEPHEN'S COLLEGE
WESTMINSTER

Studies in the History of Medieval Religion

ISSN 0955-2480

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1348–1548

ELIZABETH BIGGS

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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First published 2020
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978-1-78327-495-6

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620-2731, USA
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

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This publication is printed on acid-free paper

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Acknowledgements

I have benefitted from the support of many individuals and institutions both intellectually and practically and can only begin to touch on my debts here. I began work on St Stephen's College as part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council project, *St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster: Visual and Political Culture 1292-1941*, at the University of York and owe a great deal to the work and friendship of the other researchers working on or affiliated with that project, particularly Tim Ayers, John Cooper, Elizabeth Hallam Smith, James Hillson, Maureen Jurkowski, Simon Neal and Mark Ormrod. At Westminster, Mark Collins generously offered access to the remaining medieval physical fabric and his deep knowledge of the palace. The Arts and Humanities Research Council additionally gave me four months of research time at the Huntington Library, while the Leverhulme Trust funded further work on St Stephen's Cloisters in 2018 as part of Elizabeth Hallam Smith's Emeritus Fellowship.

I am deeply grateful to the libraries and archives I have consulted for allowing me access to their holdings, particularly to The National Archives in London, St George's College Archives in Windsor Castle, and to Tony Trowles, Matthew Payne and Christine Reynolds at Westminster Abbey. James Hillson and Adam Watrobski have very kindly allowed me to use their photographs of the surviving sixteenth-century cloister.

Erika Graham-Goering read Chapter Two at a crucial moment and provided reassurance and clarity. My parents and sister have been enormously supportive and asked all the right questions when I tested ideas on them over the years. All mistakes, omissions and errors remain my own.

EB

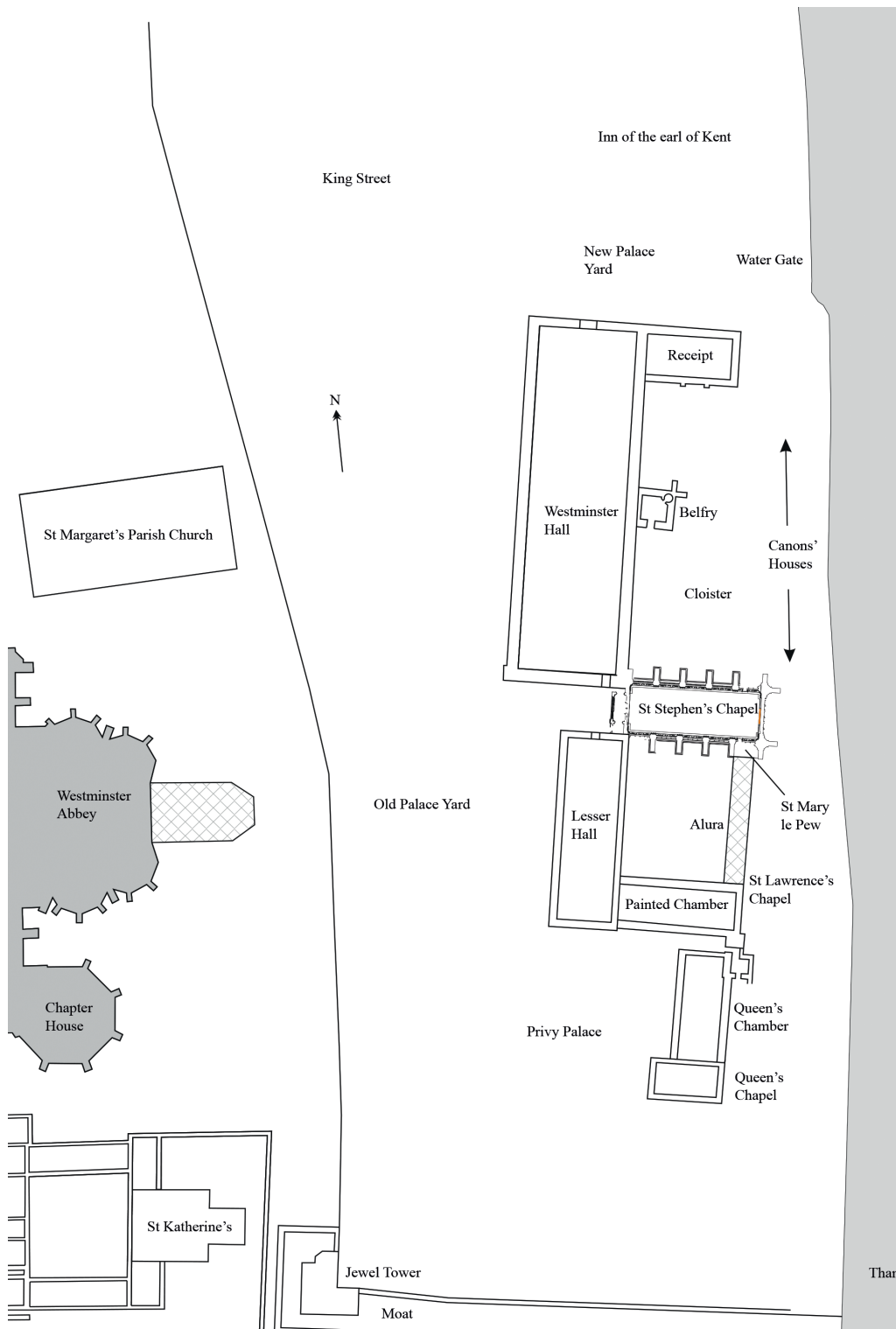
6 August 2019

Abbreviations

BL	London, the British Library.
BRUC	A.B. Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.
BRUO	A.B. Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to AD 1500</i> . 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957–1959.
BRUO 1540	A.B. Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford AD 1501–1540</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.
Cal. Pap. Letters	<i>Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Britain and Ireland 1198–1494</i> , ed. W.H. Bliss, H.C. Johnson and J.A. Tremlow. 14 vols. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1893–1960.
Cal. State Papers Edward VI	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Edward VI, 1547–1553</i> , ed. C.S. Knighton. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1992.
CChR	Calendar of Charter Rolls.
CCR	Calendar of Close Rolls.
CPR	Calendar of Patent Rolls.
EETS	Early English Text Society.
Froissart, Chronicles	Froissart, Jean. <i>Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France and the Adjoining Countries</i> . trans. J. Johnes. 5 vols. London: Hafod Press, 1803–1810.
HKW	Colvin, Howard. <i>The History of the King's Works</i> . 7 vols. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1963–1982.
HMSO	His/ Her Majesty's Stationary Office.
L & P	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII: preserved in the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and elsewhere in England</i> , ed. J.S. Brewer, James Gairdner and R.H. Brodie. 37 vols. London: His/Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1863–1932.

ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–2019. Online edition [www.oxforddnb.com].
<i>Petitions to the Pope</i>	<i>Petitions to the Pope 1342–1419</i> , ed. W.H. Bliss. London: Eyre and Spottiswode, 1896.
PROME	<i>The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1274–1509</i> , ed. Chris Given-Wilson. 16 vols. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005.
Reg. Chichele	<i>The register of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1414–1443</i> , ed. E.F. Jacob. 4 vols. Canterbury and York Society 42, 47, 46, 45. Oxford, 1938–1947.
Reg. Cranmer	London: Lambeth Palace Library, Cranmer's Register [Microfilm].
Reg. Edington	<i>The Register of William Edington, Bishop of Winchester 1346–1366</i> , ed. S.F. Hockey. 2 vols. Hampshire Record Series 7, 8. Southampton, 1986.
Reg. Langham	<i>Registrum Simonis Langham, Cantuariensis archiepiscopi</i> , ed. A.C. Wood. Canterbury and York Society. 53. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956.
Reg. Nichols	Register of Benedict, Bishop of Bangor, 1408–1417, ed. A.I. Pryce. <i>Archaeologia Cambrensis</i> , 7th series, Vol 2 (1922): 80–107.
Reg. Stafford and Kemp	D.B. Foss, 'The Canterbury Episcopates of John Stafford (1443–1452) and John Kemp (1452–1454) with editions of their registers'. PhD thesis, King's College London, 1986.
Reg. Story	<i>The Register of Edward Story, Bishop of Chichester 1478–1503</i> , ed. J.H. Stevenson. Canterbury and York Society. 106. Woodbridge, 2016.
'Statutes of St George's'	'The Statutes and Injunctions of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle', ed. Maurice Bond. Unpublished edition of galley proofs by J.N. Dalton, 1962. [An edition of Windsor, St George's College Archives, XI D 20.]
WAM	London, Westminster Abbey Muniments.

All manuscript references are to London, The National Archives unless otherwise indicated.



Westminster Palace and Environs, c. 1363, adapted from J. Hillson, 'St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster: Architecture, Decoration and Politics in the Reigns of Henry III and the Three Edwards (1227-1363)', unpublished PhD thesis (University of York, 2015), p. xxix.

Preface

St Stephen's College occupied an important chapel that dominated the Thames riverfront of the medieval Palace of Westminster among the offices of government and the royal lodgings. The chapel offered a vantage point to observe displays of kingly legitimisation, collaborations between the kings of England and the Church, and the audiences who thronged to Westminster to seek access to governance. Its liturgy and music reflected royal piety and commemoration of the royal dead. Each chapter here deals with St Stephen's from a slightly different perspective as the college and the expectations of kingship changed over two centuries. It first examines the religious and political contexts in which the college was founded and in which it had to establish its rights, until a final settlement with Westminster Abbey was reached in 1394. From 1377, Richard II adapted his grandfather's foundation as his own as he sought to remake the palace in his own image. During the dynastically troubled fifteenth century, the dean and canons of St Stephen's used its importance to the kings of England to maintain and develop its position as the 'king's chief chapel'. The increasing presence of the populace as an audience to events at Westminster shaped the college's development and buildings after 1471 before, finally, the Reformation both revitalised and then destroyed it. The empty chapel then became the first permanent home of the House of Commons. This book examines St Stephen's College as a key institution within the most important English palace: its buildings, its personnel and its relationships with every king between 1348 and 1548.

Introduction

FOR two hundred years at any one time a group of twenty-six priests, four singing men, about six choristers, a verger and a keeper of the chapel of St Mary le Pew served the king's palace chapels of St Stephen, St Mary Undercroft and the oratory of St Mary le Pew within the Palace of Westminster. These men, who belonged to the royal college of St Stephen the Protomartyr, knew their role was to pray daily for the royal family, the dead who had asked to be commemorated in the chapel, and for the kingdom of England as a whole. Their prayers were expressed through the daily round of liturgy and music enjoined upon them by their own regulations, the statutes, which modified the common liturgical practice of the southern English Church, known as the Sarum Use.¹ Their roles had been set by the college's founder, the English king Edward III, when in a letter patent dated 6 August 1348 he had commanded the foundation of the college 'to the honour of God, St Stephen the Protomartyr, and the Virgin Mary'.² On the same day he founded St George's, Windsor, the home of the Order of the Garter.³ With modifications and a considerable increase in the numbers of people prayed for, the basic pattern set in 1348 was still true at Easter 1548, when another Edward, Edward VI, dissolved all remaining institutions that had as their primary purpose to pray for the dead in Purgatory, including St Stephen's.⁴ St George's was exempted from that act. The twenty-six priests at both colleges were divided into two groups. The dean and the twelve canons were appointed by the king, and so were drawn from the world of royal service, where they also worked in the king's administration or his household and were in consequence rewarded with ecclesiastical positions at institutions with no parochial responsibilities. Their presence was expected at the main mass of the day and when otherwise required, but much of their time could be devoted to the work of administration and government in the Palace of Westminster, and they might have many other additional ecclesiastical posts. The thirteen priests who served as vicars, by contrast, were chosen by the dean and canons, and were expected to be continually present at all the services

¹ The single clause of the statutes that survives is copied in WAM 18431.

² W. Dugdale et al., *Monasticon Anglicanum: A History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales*, 6 vols (London: Longman, 1818–1830), vi, pp. 1349–50.

³ CPR 1348–1350, p. 144.

⁴ 1 Edw. VI c.14.

of the liturgy spread throughout the day, and were not allowed to hold other posts.⁵ The singers, and the two support staff, the verger and the keeper of St Mary le Pew, were also chosen by the dean and canons and lived under similar career restrictions.⁶ Collectively, all of these men and boys made up the single corporate entity that was St Stephen's College.

A late medieval college in England could be many things, as recent essay collections covering an enormous variety of topics have shown.⁷ At its core, a college was a group of priests, with perhaps support from vicars, choristers and lay servants, who were gathered together into a community with a legal identity. These institutions were headed by men called variously deans, masters or wardens, and the individual priests were canons who held prebends or stalls. Colleges were founded as permanent institutions, where each post would continue to exist after any individual had left, and which would have an income drawn from land that would sustain it independently for the rest of its existence, which was thought to be in perpetuity. The college's purpose was usually to serve a particular church or chapel and to add to the quality of prayers being offered within England as well as to pray for the founders' souls after their deaths in order to aid them in moving from Purgatory into Heaven. In addition to their church or chapel, colleges usually had some form of housing and communal space, such as the medieval closes that survive at many cathedrals. Unlike monastic communities, the priests at colleges were not bound to a rule and were free to leave the institution if they chose. Colleges ranged from very small institutions of three or four priests through to the large secular cathedrals such as Salisbury or Lincoln, which could have upwards of fifty prebends and as many vicars, as well as a large support staff.⁸ Colleges were often founded with particular charitable purposes, including to run and support almshouses or hospitals, or, in the most famous surviving examples, to provide education, such as at the university colleges in Oxford and Cambridge and schools such as Winchester College and Eton College. St Stephen's was unusual in that it did not have any educational or charitable purpose in the fourteenth century. Founders were free to shape colleges to meet

⁵ For example, the 1399 mandate from the dean to install Thomas Sutton as a new vicar, WAM 18488; *Monasticon*, vi, p. 1350.

⁶ These posts are first referenced in 1394, BL Cotton MS Faustina A III, f. 295r.

⁷ *St George's Chapel, Windsor, in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. C. Richmond and E. Scarff (Windsor: Dean and Canons of St George's, 2001); *St George's Chapel, Windsor in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005); *The Late Medieval English College and its Context*, ed. Clive Burgess and Martin Heale (York: York Medieval Press, 2008); *Wingfield College and its Patrons: Piety and Prestige in Medieval Suffolk*, ed. P. Bloore and E. Martin (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016).

⁸ The fundamental basis of all collegiate history remains A.H. Thompson, 'Notes on Colleges of Secular Canons in England', *Archaeological Journal* 74 (1917): 139–99.

their own ideas about what they wanted their foundation to do and how they wanted their piety to be expressed and commemorated in perpetuity. While there were already many surviving small early medieval colleges, St Stephen's was in the first wave of a new interest in colleges as a form of religious expression for founders in the fourteenth century, as commemoration of the dead took on increasing importance. In addition, founders increasingly saw colleges as a more attractive form of religious patronage than monasteries for their flexibility and the way they could be scaled in size to match the resources available.

Despite its importance to the kings of England over two centuries, St Stephen's exists on the edges of modern scholarship. It has functioned as a useful exemplar, but has neither been studied in its own right nor as a complete institution. The one existing summary of its history appeared in 1909 as part of the *Victoria County History of Middlesex*, which was then revised in 2009.⁹ Art historians such as Maurice Hastings and James Hillson, among others, have examined the chapel as an example of influential ecclesiastical architecture, while historians interested in the late medieval Church tend to mention it in passing, or use an aspect of its existence as an example of larger phenomena.¹⁰ Chris Given-Wilson and Ralf Lützelshwab have examined two episodes in the early life of the college: the dispute over Edward III's will, and the long-running litigation over rights and revenues claimed by both the college and Westminster Abbey.¹¹ Biographies of those who worked at the college treat it as one of many preferments held, rather than as the working base of their lives in royal or ecclesiastical administration at Westminster.¹² Some of the music definitely or probably written for the college

⁹ *The Victoria County History of the Counties of England: London I*, ed. W. Page (London: Constable and Company, 1909), pp. 566–71; *The Victoria County History of the Counties of England: Middlesex Volume XIII: City of Westminster I*, ed. P.C. Croot (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2009), pp. 66–8.

¹⁰ On the architectural side, particularly M. Hastings, *St Stephen's Chapel and its Place in the Development of Perpendicular Style in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955); J. Hillson, 'St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster: Architecture, Decoration and Politics in the Reigns of Henry III and the Three Edwards (1227–1363)', PhD thesis (University of York, 2015); *The Fabric Accounts of St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, 1292–1396*, trans. M. Jurkowski, ed. T. Ayers (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020).

¹¹ C. Given-Wilson, 'Richard II and his Grandfather's Will', *EHR* 93 (1978): 320–37; and on the fourteenth-century dispute with Westminster Abbey, R. Lützelshwab, 'Verletzte Eitelkeiten? Westminster Abbey und St Stephen's, Westminster – Mönche und Kanoniker im Konflikt', in *Pluralität – Konkurrenz – Konflikt: Religiöse Spannungen im städtischen Raum der Vormoderne*, ed. J. Oberste (Regensburg: Schell & Steiner, 2013), pp. 81–100.

¹² These include A Chibi, *Henry VIII's Bishops: Diplomats, Administrators, Scholars and Shepherds* (Cambridge: James Clark, 2003); as well as the earlier L.B. Smith, *Tudor Prelates and Politics 1536–58* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953). In the fif-

has survived in compilations now elsewhere, and have been studied in the context of the Chapel Royal's development and in the wider context of the development of polyphonic liturgical choral music in England.¹³ Few historians or art historians have been able to gain access to St Stephen's cloisters, which survive next to Westminster Hall within the modern Houses of Parliament, but have been used as office space for members of Parliament (MPs) and parliamentary staff for the past fifty years. This historical ambivalence is largely because of the problems of categorising the college across academic disciplines, and the lack of internal sources about the operation of the college, which does not make it amenable to how historians have conventionally approached the institutions of the Church, whether monastic or secular. This book is shaped by the surviving sources and their uneven distribution across the two centuries of the college's existence and uses the surviving sources to examine the place that St Stephen's occupied within the Palace of Westminster and within English kingship in the later Middle Ages.

The site that St Stephen's College occupied in Westminster has largely disappeared under the modern Houses of Parliament and the wider parliamentary estate, where the names of some buildings and streets recall the former occupants of the Thames riverfront. The precinct of St Stephen's was built up in stages and redeveloped over the centuries. However, it roughly fell into two parts, based around Edward III's grants in 1348 and 1356, which are discussed further in Chapter One.¹⁴ The core precinct comprised the river frontage of the palace from the Painted Chamber north to New Palace Yard, which contained the chapel and the communal areas, as well as houses and gardens. The second area was north of New Palace Yard, a site that in the thirteenth century had been the separate house of Edward I's younger brother, the earl of Kent.¹⁵ Both these sites have been sig-

teenth century, John Gunthorpe has received some attention, most notably in A.C. Reeves, 'John Gunthorpe: Keeper of Richard III's Privy Seal, Dean of Wells Cathedral', *Viator* 39 (2008): 307–44; St Stephen's marks the success of John Buckingham in A.K. McHardy, 'The Early Ecclesiastical Career of John Buckingham', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 8 (1975): 3–12.

¹³ A. Wathey, 'The English Chapel Royal: Models and Perspectives', in *The Royal Chapel in the Time of the Habsburgs: Music and Ceremonial in the Early Modern European Court*, ed. T. Knighton, J.J. Carreras and Bernardo García García; trans. Y. Acker (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), pp. 23–8 at p. 25; M. Williamson, 'The Eton Choirbook: Its Institutional and Historical Background', DPhil thesis (University of Oxford, 1997); D. Skinner and N. Caldwell, '"At the Mynde of Nicholas Ludford": New Light on Ludford from the Churchwarden's Accounts of St Margaret's, Westminster', *Early Music* 22 (1995): 393–415; R. Bowers, 'Choral Institutions Within the English Church: Their Constitution and Development, c.1340–1500', PhD (University of East Anglia, 1975).

¹⁴ See p. 37.

¹⁵ *CPR* 1348–1350, p. 147.

nificantly altered in the past two centuries. Antiquarians and artists documented St Stephen's after a fire in 1834 destroyed the medieval Palace of Westminster, hidden behind later facades and alterations that were stripped away by fire.¹⁶ On the northern site, the modern road Canon Row, which runs northward from Bridge Street behind Portcullis House, was the site of the deans' and canons' lodgings from the late fourteenth century onwards, and the modern street name is that in use by the sixteenth century although it has been truncated at what is today Derby Gate. At the corner of Bridge Street and Canon Row to the south, the name of St Stephen's Tavern remembers not the college, but the chapel's use by the House of Commons as their meeting place from c.1550 to 1834. Within the modern Houses of Parliament, St Stephen's Court and Cloister Court again serve as nominal markers of the site once occupied by St Stephen's College, while St Stephen's Hall, and the chapel of St Mary Undercroft beneath, occupy the site and the rough dimensions of the chapels that the college's personnel knew so well. Tucked between St Stephen's Hall and Westminster Hall, the college's cloister is one of the few surviving fragments of the medieval palace to have been preserved within the nineteenth-century building, albeit with centuries of repairs and then heavy restoration work after a bomb fell on the south-east corner in 1941.¹⁷

The Palace of Westminster lurks in the background of medieval political and administrative history because it was destroyed by fire in 1834 and the archaeology is sparse. It is hard to envisage what it was like to be present in the palace beyond the surviving Great Hall. The medieval palace, where St Stephen's Chapel dominated the skyline, had grown up over centuries of building and rebuilding, clustered around Westminster Hall, built by William Rufus and reroofed and decorated by Richard II. As can be seen in Wyngaerde's panorama from c.1544, the palace stretched out along the river front and can be divided into two distinct areas. To the north around Westminster Hall was the public palace, the rooms and subdivided areas used by the various administrative offices issuing documentation and managing royal finances that had developed by the fourteenth century,

¹⁶ For example, Robert William Billings, 'St. Stephen's Chapel: View from Speaker's Gallery after the Fire 1834', Parliamentary Art Collection, WOA 1665; alteration works in the early nineteenth century had produced antiquarian work, including J.T. Smith, *Antiquities of Westminster; the Old Palace; St. Stephen's Chapel (Now the House of Commons), Etc* (London: J.T. Smith, 1807); but it was the fire of 1834 that spurred the two extensive treatments of the chapel, first E. Brayley and J. Britton, *The History of the Ancient Palace and Late Houses of Parliament at Westminster* (London: John Weale, 1835); and then F. Mackenzie, *The Architectural Antiquities of St Stephen's Chapel, late the House of Commons* (London: John Weale, 1844); for the fire, C. Shenton, *The Day Parliament Burned Down* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁷ There is extensive documentation of the cloisters' restoration in the 1950s by Giles Gilbert Scott in WORK 14/3127.



1. St Stephen's Chapel and collegiate buildings as seen from the River Thames just after the dissolution of the college. Anthonis van den Wijngaerde, Panorama of London as seen from Southwark: Westminster, 1554 WA1950.206.1 Image © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

of which the Exchequer, Chancery and the Privy Seal Office were the largest.¹⁸ Also in this area to the north of the palace, to the right of St Stephen's Chapel on the panorama, were the law courts, where King's Bench and Common Pleas sat in Westminster Hall alongside the court of Chancery, the judicial side of Chancery. These areas were in use predictably and frequently in this period. When the courts were in session during the law terms, this end of the palace would be bustling with people coming and going. When the courts fell silent out of term, the palace was quieter, but still not deserted. To the south of St Stephen's lay the personal quarters of the king and his family, known as the privy palace.¹⁹ This area was much more restricted in terms of access, although it was not fully private, as Parliament used the Painted Chamber as well as the Queen's Chamber.²⁰ Still, for petitioners and others who came to Westminster to seek justice or documentation, St Stephen's Chapel was probably as far into the privy palace as they were likely to go. For example, the Londoners in 1357 were able to access Westminster Hall, but were not then able to cross the courtyard joining the Lesser Hall, Westminster Hall and St Stephen's Chapel without challenge.²¹ The combination of the consistent presence in term time of the courts and the king's administration with the inconsistent royal presence and the potential presence of Parliament made Westminster and St Stephen's extremely visible to a wide range of the political community.

St Stephen's College stood balanced between the two most important institutions in medieval Westminster: the king's palace and the abbey of St Peter, the coronation church since William I in 1067. The palace drew visitors to the town, separated from the City of London by open fields, to access the king's financial offices and the law courts, which had firmly settled in Westminster by the start of the fourteenth century and, when it was in session, most of the meetings of Parliament. Westminster Abbey was equally important within the town, in part as the shrine of Edward the Confessor, but also because it was the dominant landowner, held the lordship of the manor, and held the ecclesiastical role of archdeacon of Westminster.²² The parish in which the palace lay was St Margaret's, whose rector was the abbey. St Stephen's College was probably intended to have an ecclesiastical liberty of its own and to act as the parish church for the palace.

¹⁸ For the summary of the palace's built evolution, the best source remains the summaries by Colvin in *HKW*, i, pp. 491–549.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 534–7.

²⁰ J. Caddick, 'The Painted Chamber at Westminster and the Openings of Parliament, 1399–1484', *Parliamentary History* 38 (2019): 17–33 at 27–9.

²¹ *Chronicon Anonymi Cantuariensis: The Chronicle of Anonymous of Canterbury 1346–1365*, ed. C. Given-Wilson and C. Scott-Stokes (Oxford: Clarendon, 2008), p. 37.

²² Brother Peter Combe of Westminster Abbey occurs as archdeacon in 1386 in WAM 18447.

If this had been carried out, the effect would have been to remove the palace from the spiritual jurisdiction of the abbey. While the liberty was never created, St Stephen's was one of the palace chapels for the most important of the king's palaces, the administrative centre of the kingdom, as well as the residence in which the king usually spent the most time. The college co-operated, co-existed, and quarrelled with Westminster Abbey over its jurisdiction and rights within the palace, while also offering an alternative pilgrimage venue to the abbey shrine of St Edward the Confessor in the cult image, 'imagia', of the Virgin Mary in the small chapel of St Mary le Pew attached to the south side of St Stephen's Chapel.²³ The college built up and developed its secular rights within the area; by the sixteenth century it was the second-largest landowner in Westminster after the abbey itself.²⁴ The canons took part in the world of administration based in the palace even as the nature and rhetoric of administration changed. Westminster's role in governance and the urban world can be seen in the frequent use of canons as receivers of petitions or clerks of Parliament in parliaments held in the vicinity of the palace. Economically and spatially, as well as musically, St Stephen's looked to the urban world and the world of governance that surrounded them as well as to the king's household and his court.

St Stephen's College is alone among the late medieval colleges founded by or inherited by the kings of England because it received sustained attention in a way that no other college did. It is the consistent presence at St Stephen's of royal support long after its foundation that distinguishes it from other royally founded colleges, and makes it comparable to the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, where the founder was both king and saint.²⁵ Every king from Edward III to Henry VIII was commemorated by a yearly anniversary service, apart from Richard III and Edward V, both of whom were unable to make provisions to add themselves to the college's remembrances. Royal support to the college seems in part to have been the result of sustained proximity, and to the college's role in visualising and carrying out kingship and governance. St Stephen's thus offers an alternative to

²³ First referenced in SC 8/247/12304.

²⁴ The college's London and Westminster rents brought in £220 17s 2d per annum in 1548, *London and Middlesex Chantry Certificate 1548*, ed. C.J. Kitching, London Record Society 16 (London, 1980), p. 78; in 1535 the Westminster rents alone brought in £145 10s 4d, *Valor ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII: Auctoritate regia institutus*, ed. J. Caley and J. Hunter, 6 vols (London: Great Britain Record Commission, 1810–34), i, pp. 428–9; in contrast, the abbey in 1535 was receiving c.£271 annually from its tenements in the area: G. Rosser, *Medieval Westminster, 1200–1540* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 342–4.

²⁵ M. Cohen, *The Sainte Chapelle and the Construction of Sacral Monarchy: Royal Architecture in Thirteenth Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 152, 168.

studying individual kings' piety. It provides an opportunity to examine royal piety comparatively across ten English kings in two centuries and thus to begin to tease out the ways in which different kings responded differently to the apparatus of sacral monarchy available to them and expected of them in a single space.²⁶ Monarchy was performed at St Stephen's, where a small crowd in the nave could just barely see the king seated in relation to the murals staking out Edward III's personal sense of a relationship with the saints, and still more could see him enter or leave the chapel on feast days in procession as an embodiment of quasi-sacral power.²⁷ Even when the ruling king was absent, in the liturgy of St Stephen's he was present in the daily round of prayer and in the music sung in the chapel.²⁸ Every visitor, from Froissart to the sixteenth-century knights who heard mass in the chapel while at Westminster for law cases, would have been aware of the royal splendour and patronage shown in the heraldic decoration, the richness of the liturgical furnishings and the lavishness of the services.²⁹ The college was an expression of royal dynastic piety, and one that kings were careful to make their own, as well as to respond to the works of their predecessors. In addition, the canons of St Stephen's working within the king's government, in Chancery, the Exchequer and in the royal household, were part of the delegated royal government that carried out the king's will. As the men appointed to canonries were consistently usually associated with royal service, despite the increase in laymen in royal government, the personnel at St Stephen's combined both the religious and practical sides of medieval kingship.³⁰

²⁶ There are few comparative studies of English royal piety in the later Middle Ages on the ways in which Richard II constructed saintliness for Edward II: Chris Given-Wilson, 'Richard II, Edward II and the Lancastrian Inheritance', *EHR* 109 (1994): 553–71; on the three Edwards's use of religion to project images of piety: W.M. Ormrod, 'The English Monarchy and the Promotion of Religion in the Fourteenth Century', in *Religion und Politik im Mittelalter: Deutschland und England im Vergleich*, ed. L. Körntgen and D. Waßenhoven (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 205–18; on the limited theme of patronage: J.T. Rosenthal, 'Kings, Continuity and Ecclesiastical Benefaction in Fifteenth Century England', in *People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. J.T. Rosenthal and C. Richmond (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1987), pp. 161–75; for a later period remembering the three Edwards: C. Farris, 'The New Edwardians? Royal Piety in the Yorkist Age', in *The Yorkist Age: Proceedings of the 2011 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. H. Kleineke and C. Steer (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2013), pp. 44–63.

²⁷ *Liber Regie Capelle*, ed. W. Ullmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 56–7.

²⁸ This is implied by the foundation letter patent, where the college was to pray in perpetuity for Edward III, his progenitors and his successors, *CPR* 1348–50, p. 147.

²⁹ See below, Chapter Four, pp. 148–9 and 151–5.

³⁰ They thus feed into debates about the changing nature of clerical involvement in government; R.L. Storey, 'Gentlemen-bureaucrats', in *Profession, Vocation and Culture*

St Stephen's offers a way forward for long-running discussions about the nature of the king's household and its relationship to the king and the concepts of kingship and of governance. The expectations and norms of kingship have been hard to tease out in individual studies of particular kings because they were contingent and dependent on the personal will of the individual who happened to be king at any given moment, as well as on the expectations of the aristocracy and the commons, and external events such as unrest, warfare and famines. By looking at St Stephen's Chapel and College, which by necessity had a working relationship with each of the English kings from 1348 to 1548, it is possible to see the ways in which the monarch was constrained by the expectations of a particularly public palace, and the standards of display expected, while also assessing the space they had in which to introduce their own personal desires and innovations to the workings of governance in their name. St Stephen's was more than just a place of royal piety because it was also the home of many of those who worked in the offices of governance. While the concept of the court as a place of political action has been contested for the fifteenth century and its importance has been questioned, all power came from the king in person and physical access to the king conditioned access to power. St Stephen's allows us to examine both the king's household and his administration, which are often treated separately for the later Middle Ages, because the canons of St Stephen's worked in both, and might move between the two elements of delegated royal authority, and access to the king. Routine government was delegated to greater or lesser extent to those officials and justices who carried out the established procedures of each of the courts and the offices that had developed over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At Westminster the widest possible range of individuals could, in theory, have some access to the king, whether in person from a distance or through his government, because all subjects had to have access to the law courts and to the offices of government around them, clustered around Westminster Hall. At Westminster, then, personal and corporate kingship could and did interact.

in *Later Medieval England: Essays Dedicated to the Memory of A. R. Myers*, ed. C.H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), pp. 90–130; C.W. Smith, 'Some Trends in the English Royal Chancery 1377–1483', *Medieval Prosopography* 6 (1985): 69–94; C. Carpenter, 'Henry VI and the Deskillling of the Royal Bureaucracy', in *The Fifteenth Century IX: English and Continental Perspectives*, ed. L. Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), pp. 1–37; for a view of careerism as a positive public force, see M. Bennett, 'Careerism in Late Medieval England', in *People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. J.T. Rosenthal and C. Richmond (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1987), pp. 19–39.

Models of Kingship

St Stephen's participated in the systems of governance that made medieval kingship in the widest sense possible. Royal administration, in which most canons worked during their time at the college, was dependent on powers delegated from the king to those who worked in the administrative and financial offices based at Westminster or who travelled with the king's person. The king was central to the late medieval English political system, and all else depended on his willingness to participate in the systems of governance that had been developed to administer his financial, legal and military interests throughout England and, during times of war, overseas.³¹ This corporate kingship, the ways in which the king's personal decisions and those of administrators and other influential figures acting in his name are often indistinguishable, resulted from the ways in which the delegation of power went alongside a fiction that the king ruled by himself with the advice of others, rather than other individuals receiving delegated authority. Political life as expressed through a variety of means, from popular protest through to the pressure of the great magnates, focused on ensuring that the king acted correctly and that his governance was perceived as fair and just. When there were disputes between the king and his subjects, opposition to the king was often couched in terms of opposition to those who were counselling him rather than to the king himself, as by changing his councillors he could be brought back into harmony with the wishes of the whole kingdom and the common good.³² Counsel was the mechanism by which the king could be influenced, but the work of government was in theory directed by the king's own wishes, even as in practice it was far too wide-ranging and specialised in its routine operation for full royal oversight. The work the canons did in royal administration ranged from taking part in the king's councils, working in the writing offices of Chancery and the Privy Seal Office, to the financial management carried out by the Exchequer. All of these offices were part of the corporate kingship that was based at Westminster and which was the side of kingship that most late medieval and early modern individuals would have come into contact with, when they paid their taxes, took part in legal disputes or sought documentation or grants from Chancery.³³

In addition to routine government and this idea of corporate kingship, which

³¹ G.L. Harriss, 'Introduction', in *Henry V: The Practice of Kingship*, ed. G.L. Harriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 1–29 at pp. 10, 13–14.

³² J. Rose, 'The Problem of Political Counsel', in *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286–1707*, ed. J. Rose (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 1–45 at p. 36.

³³ G.L. Harriss, *Shaping the Nation: England 1360–1461* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 41.

acknowledges that much more was done in the king's name than the king himself ever could know of, St Stephen's College offers another way to think about what was expected of a successful king. Much of the work done on expectations of kingship as a concept has focused on the didactic texts known as mirrors for princes, because they offer a clear set of discussions about how kings and other lords should behave, even as they raise questions about how far they influenced individuals' practices.³⁴ They also responded to changing circumstances, and so can be used to show attitudes in flux and responding to political changes and challenges. The mirrors represented the best of political theory in England during this period. Thus, they provide a means of looking at what John Watts called the 'structures of authority' rather than the choices of individual kings and particular political circumstances.³⁵ As Watts has argued from the mirrors of monarchy and the reign of Henry VI, these frameworks of kingship constrained and shaped the possibilities open to individual monarchs while also being highly vulnerable to their failings. There are three elements in which St Stephen's allows us to examine both kingship and the choices of individual kings over the two centuries in which the college was active in new ways. First, it allows us to compare the working of patronage and how that shifted over time, particularly patronage to those who served the king, whether clerical or lay. The successful balancing of patronage and loyalties by the king were acknowledged by the mirrors of princes as key to maintaining a successful reign. St Stephen's was consistently a recipient of royal patronage, both to the canons as individuals and to the institution as a whole. Second, it allows us to look at how kings constructed themselves in relation to their predecessors and to their own sense of dynasty and legitimation through how they presented themselves in relation to the institution of St Stephen's College. Third, the college was inherently public-facing and so allows for a discussion of how kingship was constructed for those watching the piety of the king or his proxies within the Palace of Westminster.

Whether the king's relationship with his administration was necessary for understanding the political life of England and Wales has been contested. An older view of kingship saw the king's person as secondary to the central work done by the bureaucrats who issued documentation in his name. T.F. Tout in his magisterial *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, published in the 1920s, argued that government was the work of career bureaucrats, possibly directed by those officers at the head of their departments, who

³⁴ K. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Later Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 17–18; J. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 9–11.

³⁵ Watts, *Henry VI*, p. 10.

were appointed by the king but were not necessarily directed by him.³⁶ In Tout's view, the king was an irrelevance to the governance of the country, and kingship did not play into the history of government. Tout's work on the administrators of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries opened up the records of the financial and legal offices that developed into the system of offices based at Westminster. The importance of his knowledge of the records has lasted beyond the influence of his own views on the importance of government. In the mid-twentieth century, K.B. McFarlane's influential work on the relationship between the king and the great magnates turned historians' attention to the networks of personal relationships and affinities, which McFarlane saw as key to understanding the political history of particularly the turbulent and uncertain fifteenth century.³⁷ The bureaucrats became an irrelevance, perhaps of interest for their literary and religious interests, but not particularly useful for understanding the political culture that directed their work. More recently, structural factors have returned to the historiography with the work of Simon Walker and John Watts, among others. Walker examined the interplay between individuals and political ideas, particularly in his study of Richard Andrew, secretary to Henry VI.³⁸ Watts has suggested that the mirrors of monarchy treatises of the fifteenth century give an insight into the expectations of the political community – as widely defined – of their king, which then structured the possibilities of political action.³⁹ Yet this structural approach does not fully bring the personnel and expectations of government back into the picture – in part because, as Ralph Griffiths has commented, the prosopographical understanding of the entirety of fifteenth-century government has not been attempted.⁴⁰ This book is not that study, but it does use the canons of St Stephen's, because they were part of the wider world of both government and the king's household, to examine the spatial and personal relationships that were possible between royal administration and the household when they were all at Westminster.

³⁶ T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, 6 vols (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920–33), i, pp. 5–6.

³⁷ Particularly K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures of 1953* (Oxford, 1973), 2, pp. 120–1.

³⁸ '[Walker] believed that the detailed examination of such individual lives [Andrew], and their social and political context, would afford an understanding of how political language and ideas informed the operation of power at all levels', G.L. Harriss, 'Introduction', in S. Walker, *Political Culture in Later Medieval England*, ed. M.J. Braddick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 1–14 at p. 12.

³⁹ Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 15–16.

⁴⁰ R.A. Griffiths, 'Public and Private Bureaucracies in England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century', in Griffiths, *King and Country: England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Hambledon, 1991), pp. 137–60 at p. 139.

The other major theme that emerges from the study of kings in the later Middle Ages and into the sixteenth century is the importance of image, of magnificence, and of appearing to be the consecrated king as a key element of actually being the king. Historians have noted that commentators, particularly chroniclers, commented on whether or not the king appeared to be royal, such as the failure of the procession in 1471, which attempted to situate Henry VI as king in opposition to the returning Edward IV.⁴¹ David Starkey opened up the question of the court's role in political life, which has enthusiastically been taken up and developed further.⁴² John Watts has argued against seeing the court as always a political centre, noting that it was kings who failed to be seen as successful by military means and who most turned to lavish self-presentation as royal through their households.⁴³ Richard II's relationship with magnificence has been well commented on, and the ways in which he related himself to the saints.⁴⁴ Even more conventionally successful kings such as Henry V or Edward IV were conscious of the importance of appearance, of living up to expectations and taking part in the round of ceremonial that Fiona Kisby has identified as structuring the life of the royal household and, by extension, displaying the king to his subjects at particularly significant points in the liturgical year.⁴⁵ The coronation ceremony might be the moment when an individual became sacralised as king, but he was continually reinforcing that moment through his self-presentation and successes, as well as by his continuing relationship with the Church. That Edward III was both militarily and dynastically successful meant that by the fifteenth century he had become, as D.A.L. Morgan has shown, the model that later kings, mired in dynastic uncertainty and with their legitimacy questioned, attempted to emulate.⁴⁶ St Stephen's, with its strong connections to Edward III, was thus ideally placed to display royal magnificent support to the Church, a sense of royal dynastic awareness and public

⁴¹ *Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV in England*, ed. J. Bruce, Camden Society Old Series I (London, 1838), pp. 15–16.

⁴² See particularly the essays in *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. D. Starkey (London: Longmans, 1987), and below p. 137–9.

⁴³ Watts, 'Was there a Lancastrian Court?', in *The Lancastrian Court*, ed. J. Stratford (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2003), pp. 253–71 at p. 270.

⁴⁴ For Richard II see most recently discussion in D. Gordon, 'The Wilton Diptych as an Icon of Kingship', in *The Wilton Diptych*, ed. D. Gordon (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 35–91.

⁴⁵ F. Kisby, 'Where the King Goeth a Procession: Chapel Ceremonies and Services, the Ritual Year, and Religious Reforms at the Early Tudor Court, 1485–1547', *Journal of British Studies* 40 (2001): 44–75.

⁴⁶ D.A.L. Morgan, 'The Political After-Life of Edward III: The Apotheosis of a Warmonger', *EHR* 112 (1997): 856–81.