

APPENDIX 8

Editor's notes to second edition

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'The Lady Clare!' On my first day as an undergraduate, we rose for the first of many such toasts to her memory, and the face that gazed down at us was the one that you see on the front cover. In the eighteenth-century portrait by Joseph Freeman, the Lady presides over diners in the hall at Clare College. The statutes, like other contemporary documents, refer to the *Lady of Clare*, but somehow over the centuries this has been shortened. It may be fortunate that the name of Clare has but one syllable.

I rowed for one glorious summer in a boat called *The Lady Clare*. She was a beautiful wooden shell four; on a good day we could persuade her to hum, and to skim very gracefully over the surface of the river. We won quite a few races that summer, and our toasts were especially fervent. Crewmates went on to greater triumphs, but that was the peak of my rowing career. Clare Boat Club later launched the *Elizabeth de Burgh*: I am pleased to hear that she still goes on outings.

Some people feel that the Freeman portrait captures little of the steel expressed in the statutes and in the Lady's life story. Some of us feel that this just shows how men continue to underestimate attractive women. In any event, it is the image that many of us have in mind when we pray for our benefactors, and raise our glasses in Mumbai or Bangkok to drink to 'The Lady Clare!'

The second edition

It was in Kuala Lumpur, overlooking the Twin Towers, that I last had the opportunity to drink such a toast with all members of the excellent Clare College Choir. It was in the Japanese-owned bookshop in those towers that I had found the first edition of this book. This was quite a stroke of luck, and not just because the cover had no visual or verbal allusion to Clare.

It's an excellent bookshop, and serendipitous finds have been many, but it was only when I tried to buy more copies that I discovered how few had reached England. The museum at Clare in Suffolk, Elizabeth's home base, had been unable to obtain it – but one had arrived in Malaysia! I tried all the usual online merchants, and the US publisher, to no avail, before asking if Clare College had a stock. Its development director, Fran Malaree, keen to celebrate an upcoming anniversary of the admission of women, contacted the publisher again to ask about availability, and discussed a new print run, before deciding on a new edition to which we would have the opportunity to add illustrations, and new material. The late author, Fran Underhill, was delighted by the prospect that her book would finally reach more of its natural readership in the UK. I am sorry that she did not live to see this realised, but imagine that she would appreciate some of our additions, and enjoy hearing of the various initiatives researching places and people dear to Elizabeth. As I write, a new excavation is about to start in the Inner Bailey of Clare Castle.

Having known very little about Elizabeth's life until reading the first edition, I was gripped by its stories, and immediately thought of many questions. As I investigated, some have been answered (at least partially), some shelved, and many new lines of enquiry opened up. The questions and topics that now interest me most are very different from those with which I started. I have no expertise in any of these subjects, but will set out below some of what I have found interesting – apart from the many resonances with modern worlds in which influence remains quite different from power, resistance has to be calibrated, and networks of social obligation and friendship are still highly relevant.

The flurry of college openings in Cambridge 1317–1352

I was fascinated to read of the enduring and endearing friendship between Elizabeth de Burgh and Marie de St Pol, and to imagine them comparing notes as they pursued their parallel philanthropic interests, supporting different religious establishments, and each endowing a Cambridge college. Lists of founding dates suggested a flurry of five Cambridge colleges founded in the quarter-century between 1326 and 1352, with a long gap before (since Peterhouse, 1284) and an even longer gap after (89 years until the foundation of King's). Had the two ladies encouraged contemporaries to follow their philanthropic lead?

They probably did, but in the context of the royal patronage which led to not five but seven college openings, the key being the foundation of King's Hall in 1317 by Edward II, which paved the way for increasing attention and patronage by a number of his officials and noblemen. The other name missing from current college listings is Michaelhouse, founded in 1324 by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer Hervey de Stanton. Both King's Hall and Michaelhouse had to be surrendered to Henry VIII, and were absorbed into Trinity College in 1540; Clare College narrowly escaped a similar fate.

Edward III set up a Royal Commission to study the issues in 1332, and was thinking about the restructuring and re-endowment of King's Hall in 1336 when Elizabeth responded to an appeal to help the struggling University Hall. Practical requirements topped the agenda. Edward II had sent some of the young King's Scholars to Cambridge from the Chapel Royal; Edward III emphasised the need to increase university education to serve the needs of both church and state.¹ Elizabeth saw the opportunity to provide training for her own future managers, and may have welcomed some direct feedback on the troubled institution; from 1336 contingents of her 'little clerks' were escorted to and fro. When she eventually set out the statutes for Clare College more than two decades later, there was the additional imperative to rebuild after the devastating impact of the plague; she outlined a broad vision which echoed the king's, for the service of both church and state.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth's involvement and interest had deepened gradually between 1338 and 1346, and it was ten years after her initial assistance that she tightened control, renamed, and re-endowed Clare College. Meanwhile Marie had started planning for her college from 1342, and Pembroke College was founded in 1347.² Their friend Henry of Grosmont, 1st Duke of Lancaster, became the patron of Corpus Christi College when that was established by town guilds in 1352. The founders of the other two colleges may not have moved in the same social circles, but Edmund Gonville had worked for the king, as well as for Henry and for John de Warenne, under whose patronage he had previously founded the Dominican friary at Thetford. He had also advised Marie on the foundation of her college.³ William Bateman, Bishop of Norwich, his friend and executor, was left to finish the establishment of Gonville College as well as his own foundation of Trinity Hall.

Geography of medieval Cambridge

I wondered about location choices and land acquisition for the colleges of Clare and Pembroke. Elizabeth made no such choices: University Hall had been established on a site acquired by the university a few decades earlier. Marie did buy land, and chose a site on the High Street (now Trumpington Street) which was high and stable. It was close to the Augustinian friary,⁴ but like Peterhouse, outside the King's Ditch, which formed part of the defences of the city.

The High Street was the key north–south axis of the city, on a gravel ridge, connecting to Bridge Street and the castle. It remains so now, although with changing names: St John's Street, Trinity Street, King's Parade, and Trumpington Street. Its landmark churches were already in place in Elizabeth's day.

Milne Street ran parallel, closer to the river. Only parts now survive, as Trinity Lane and Queen's Lane; royal backing for the great colleges of King's and Trinity enabled the acquisition of thoroughfares. However, it is this road, as Trinity Lane, which runs between Clare's Old Court and the university's Old Schools;⁵ it is still the access road for Clare College and Trinity Hall.

Clare's medieval buildings are thought to have fronted directly onto Milne Street, rather than being set back behind a forecourt lawn as they are today. In 1714 Edmund Prideaux, a 21-year-old student, made a reconstructed view of the college before the 17th-century rebuild. Recent test excavations showed no evidence of structural damage or new foundations after the fire of 1521, so the Prideaux impression of its 1638 appearance (image 35) may give a good idea of the eventual medieval layout.⁶ However, building was gradual over the centuries, and does not seem to have been an immediate priority during Elizabeth's lifetime.

Building work on the present Old Court of Corpus Christi College started immediately after its foundation in 1352, so Elizabeth may have seen it. Recent archaeological work there revealed medieval timbers and other structural evidence of the layout and appearance of the original Great Hall and Master's Lodge, and five sculpted stone corbels of angels and musicians.⁷

Clare College at its foundation was in the parish of St John Zachary. The church stood on the river side of Milne Street, just south of Clare College, on what is now King's Lawn. I puzzled over the identity of its patron saint before realising that the name represents John, son of Zachary (or Zechariah) – St John the Baptist.⁸ In 1445 the land was acquired by Henry

VI, and the church demolished to make way for the construction of King's College Chapel. The congregations from Trinity Hall and Clare College were assigned to the church of St Edward King and Martyr, with the north and south aisles extended to provide a chapel for each.

The Church of St John Zachary is shown on a map from the Historic Towns Atlas, which shows the major features of late medieval times overlaid with those c.1800. This is a fascinating map, but complex.⁹ The HTA plans to turn its attention to Cambridge for fuller treatment soon – and meanwhile there is a map online for Cambridge in the 1350s.¹⁰

Evolution of Clare College's statutes

The ongoing inclusion of Elizabeth's introduction to her statutes for Clare College had always sparked my imagination. Despite changing circumstances and the impossibility of the control to which many mortals aspire, some influence can endure over centuries. As with art or with beautiful craftsmanship, individuals far into the future may respond to an inspiring vision, or to expressions of hope. Perhaps the appeal is enhanced by a story in which leadership, high goals, and perseverance ultimately triumphed. The single paragraph speaks succinctly of adversity survived, and the practical impact of plague; we read it with the reassuring knowledge of a happy ending.

I had also been impressed, around the turn of this century, by the care with which one necessary change to the statutes was effected. I forget now what changed, but remember the process. The whole text was circulated, with the previous and proposed wording carefully highlighted and the amendment explained. Consensus was achieved, and a proposal submitted to the Privy Council, where it was duly ratified. The constitutional framework was clearly not to be trifled with: changes could be made when desirable, but treated with gravitas.

Major changes in recent times had included the 1966 foundation of Clare Hall, using funding from the Clare College endowment to expand the provision for research and for graduate students,¹¹ and the 1970 decision to admit women.¹²

An idea arose that it might be interesting to look at changes in the statutes over time, examining lasting structures and the circumstances in which it proved necessary to change. This proved well beyond my capabilities, not only because of the practical difficulties in evaluating (or even reading) the various copies of some earlier versions, but because it rapidly became clear

that the most significant changes were effected in the context of developments affecting the universities and all colleges, and could only sensibly be assessed in this much broader context. Major studies had been undertaken in the 19th century when educational reforms were mooted and under way, and I have gratefully drawn on that great body of work for the notes in Appendix 6 relating to Elizabeth's 1359 statutes.

The Clare College seal

My delight on first seeing a photograph of Clare College's 14th-century seal was rapidly followed by puzzlement. As an undergraduate I had understood, evidently incorrectly, that no physical link to the medieval college had survived. Decades later, I was excited to see the image, and to learn that casts of wax impressions still exist in the museum of the Society of Antiquaries in London.¹³ Then I read that the college still owns the original silver matrix, received in 1359 from Elizabeth herself – and realised that she would have taken a close personal interest in the design. Why were modern publications using the same old photograph?

It turned out that successive authors, publishers and exhibition curators from at least 1999 onwards had made enquiries with college officials who were temporarily unable to locate the seal. Since the last official record appeared to be in the 1939 *Catalogue of the Plate of Clare College*, wartime loss seemed all too possible – especially in the context of the college's previous losses during the Reformation and the Civil War. Yet there appeared to be no records of such loss, or concern; it was hoped that the seal would turn up...

... and it did, in 2017. Everyone had been looking in the wrong places, or asking the wrong people. It was one of the college's historians who realised that the seal matrix might not be stored with archives and other items of historic interest, but required by the administrative officers of the college. The matrix had been safe and sound all along, and was said to be still in use, required for certain financial transactions.

Relief was followed by an inspection, at which the beauty of the design was admired – and then many questions arose. What were all the figures holding? How do we know who they are? Previous descriptions told us that the Virgin and Child were flanked by St John the Baptist and St John the Divine – why these two? What exactly was the lettering of the inscription, and its meaning? Could we please have a high resolution photograph, for circulation to experts able to enlighten us?

We eventually found satisfactory answers to the first few. The object held by St John the Baptist, portrayed with long hair, beard, and a simple garment of camelhair for his stint in the desert, is an *Agnus Dei* – an oval or circular wax tablet made from the remnants of special Paschal Candles blessed by a pope during the first Easter of his pontificate and at seven-year intervals thereafter. Later they were also made overseas under licence. Stamped with designs such as the lamb and cross shown here, they were usually kept in frames, and were highly valued for their prophylactic and amuletic powers; they were sometimes placed in churches and other important buildings for protection.¹⁴ *Agnus Dei* means ‘lamb of God’, referring to the identification of Jesus by St John the Baptist. The saint was often depicted with a lamb, or with the widely recognised symbols of the lamb and cross, or lamb and flag.¹⁵

The other saint was identified as St John the Evangelist by only some of the past writers, perhaps because the eagle on his arm is not very clear in the old photo, but it seems clear on visual inspection. What he holds in the other hand, and the similar long item held by the Virgin Mary, have been the subject of some discussion. Previous identifications as palm branches seem puzzling, since these are often used as a symbol of martyrdom, and neither St John nor the Virgin were martyred. John had survived one attempt to kill him, so a palm could refer to that incident, or (we speculated) to flexibility and resilience – but the object can equally well be interpreted as a long feather, for a quill pen, one of his other emblems, referring to his authorship of a gospel; he can be seen with a similarly long feather in some contemporary manuscript images.¹⁶

The object held by the Virgin may be interpreted as a lily, or lily sceptre, which she holds in many other contemporary representations – including the statue at Walsingham, one of the greatest pilgrimage sites of the day; given Elizabeth's role in founding the friary there, it seems possible that an allusion was intended.

The presence of St John the Baptist, the patron saint of the parish, seemed natural enough, but why St John the Apostle?¹⁷ An allusion to St John's Hospital has been mentioned: the hospital (later incorporated into St John's College) was an important institution in Cambridge, and would have played an especially large role during the plague years mentioned in the statutes. Elizabeth had also reverted to using the family name of her first husband, John de Burgh, so this may have supported her choice of two St Johns. It would not have been an unusual combination, and St John the

Apostle was a role model of filial duty, good practice, and learning, all appropriate to the spiritual and intellectual hopes for the new college.

The Latin inscription prompted further discussion. It reads

Aulā Clare Pia Rege Semper Virgo Maria¹⁸

and experts in the manuscripts of the period explained that the macron is a scribal abbreviation for a missing ‘m’ or ‘n’. Only the former makes sense here, so the inscription should be read as

Aulam Clare Pia Rege Semper Virgo Maria.

I initially assumed that previous authors offered no translation because they could assume that all of their readers read Latin fluently. However, this now seems unusual even in Cambridge,¹⁹ so I may not be the only person glad of a step-by-step walkthrough.

‘Virgo’ is in the vocative case, so ‘Virgo Maria’ is being addressed. ‘Rege’ is the imperative of the verb ‘regere’, to rule or to guide. ‘Aulam’ is in the accusative case, so ‘Aulam Clare’, Clare Hall, is the object. These uncontroversial elements suffice to communicate the core of the message, along the lines of: ‘O Virgin Mary, please guide Clare Hall’.

Assumptions that the words ‘pia’ and ‘semper’ related to ‘rege’ were overturned. ‘Semper Virgo Maria’ was often used as a phrase, ‘O Mary, ever-virgin’. ‘Semper’ could also relate to ‘rege’, asking that guidance be provided for ever. Since Elizabeth was nearing the end of her life, and laying down statutes to last in perpetuity, the latter would be apt, and the original Latin may have suggested both meanings, but the standard formulation was so commonly used that scholars have favoured that interpretation. ‘Pia’ is a case of the adjective ‘pius’ meaning righteous, conscientious, virtuous; in this context I am told that it can only be vocative, relating to ‘Virgo Maria’. The inscription may therefore be translated as

Holy Mary, ever Virgin, rule over Clare Hall.

Modern imaging may at some stage shed new light, but for this edition Clare College has preferred that we should republish the old photograph taken more than eighty years ago. Some details unclear in that photo are clearly visible on physical inspection of the matrix, for example the crown of the Virgin. High-resolution photos, lit from different angles, would have facilitated discussion. The Imaging Department of the Cambridge University Library believes that modern photography may also pick up

details invisible to the naked eye. Electronic imaging may give further insights, for example on production techniques.²⁰ On a wax impression of Elizabeth's second personal seal, four tiny initials were detected and tentatively linked with goldsmiths known to have worked for King Edward III.²¹ William St John Hope noted similarities of design and manufacture between six or seven seals 'of great artistic merit... apparently the work of the same engraver': the two personal seals used by Elizabeth; and the personal seals of Marie de St Pol, countess of Pembroke; John de Bohun, earl of Hereford; Richard Fitzalan, earl of Arundel; and Hugh Courtenay, earl of Devon. Another seal tentatively included was for Henry Sturmy, lord of Savernake Forest – presumably related to Sir John Sturmy, the admiral who was at Clare Castle immediately after Queen Isabella's invasion, mentioned several times in this book.²² Seals with design similarities include those of the countess of Oxford. The friends would have seen each other's seals frequently on correspondence, and one can imagine them comparing notes on design and recommendations for craftsmen.

Lovers of tradition have been delighted to hear that the 660-year-old seal is still in use, and it would be fun to know details. A copy of the original matrix was made in the 18th century, so that it could be used in a press, as the original has a handle. Does the press survive? How are seals currently applied? Are both seals used, or one more than the other? For what types of transaction?

Secrecy on these simple questions seems curious. Seals are made to be recognised; the present royal seal is proudly displayed by recipients and in public galleries. This seal encapsulates the hopes for an institution, and a powerful brand image. The accompanying statutes were to be read at regular intervals, so that their provisions remained familiar to all. With a mission statement to enlighten those who walk in the dark paths of ignorance, the imagery of the seal was designed to be seen and understood.

Books and patronage

None of the books, textiles, or precious items mentioned in Elizabeth's will are known to have survived. Nor have any objects known to have been commissioned by her, except the seal matrix of Clare College, the modest bell described in Appendix 7, and some structural elements of her buildings.²³ However, sufficient details survive in the accounts and other administrative records for Professor Underhill to have written an earlier paper on Elizabeth's role as a connoisseur and patron,²⁴ noting that:

‘The most important fourteenth-century arts often are classified today as minor arts: embroidery, goldsmiths’ works, illuminated manuscripts, carvings in ivory and jewelry. All of these qualified as major artistic endeavors in the Middle Ages, and ones most likely to be patronized by the laity... Elizabeth de Burgh loved and purchased all the so-called minor arts; contributed funds to major ecclesiastical projects; founded and built two friaries, a chantry, several chapels, and a college; added to three of her principal residences; and built a house in London. Beyond that, she enjoyed music, bought books, and interacted with some of the prominent intellectuals of her day. Her patronage was broadly conceived, touching the heart of fourteenth-century culture and art.’

One of my favourite anecdotes from that paper relates to a buying spree in London in 1350–51: ‘Elizabeth sent seven horses to transport her book purchases home’.

It was only while seeking illustrations for this book that I discovered that the illuminated manuscripts and embroidered textiles of Elizabeth’s lifetime are some of the finest ever produced, and that East Anglia, then one of the most prosperous regions of the country, was a centre for fine craftsmanship and stunning, innovative architecture, as well as intellectual activity. Jennifer Ward has written in Appendix 3 of Elizabeth’s friendship with her Bohun cousins; many of Elizabeth’s other friends and relatives are associated with beautiful manuscripts and notable projects. The relationships between patrons, project architects and craftsmen are intriguing; among the former, I’ll mention just a few of the names and anecdotes that caught my attention.

Elizabeth’s grandmother Queen Eleanor of Castile died before she was born, but her influence on the commissioning, practical uses, and appreciation of books may have influenced several generations of her descendants – as, too, her love of gardens and fine craftsmanship; throughout her life she continued to order luxury goods from the Middle East, through merchants encountered there.²⁵ The education she acquired at her father’s court allowed her to commission translations of works on military strategy, kingship and governance; a royal library was available to subsequent kings. The Alphonso Psalter started for Eleanor’s beloved heir is thought to have been completed by her youngest daughter Elizabeth of Rhuddlan, godmother and aunt to the Lady of Clare, whose own children were the first generation of bibliophile Bohuns.

Edward I’s second wife Queen Margaret of France is the person most

likely to have commissioned the Queen Isabella Psalter now in Munich, as a gift for her niece Isabella ahead of her 1308 wedding and move to England.²⁶ The variety of the images, the thoughtfulness of illustrating for both delight and guidance, and her later patronage of the Grey Friars in London, are among the straws in the wind that make me wish to know more about this lady. Edward I gave her responsibility for his grandson Gilbert de Clare; she may well have played some role in the education of his sisters.

Queen Isabella became famous as a collector and commissioner of books, and was involved in a remarkable series of works to influence her husband and educate her son in kingship and governance, suggesting great faith in the power of words and images. I have been fascinated by visual analysis of biting social and political commentary in some of the imagery of this period.²⁷ Queen Isabella is also associated with many beautifully illustrated works such as the Queen Mary Psalter (c.1316–21, named for a much later owner), and the Taymouth Hours (c.1325–1335).²⁸ She had a lifelong love of fiction and romance; the books she lent to King John of France in the year before her death were on the Holy Grail and Sir Lancelot.²⁹

Elizabeth's friend and first cousin Joan of Bar was the estranged wife of John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, credited as the patron of the Gorleston Psalter, the beautiful second campaign (1316–19) of the Ormesby Psalter, and the Thornham Parva Retable and its counterpart altar frontal in Paris for the foundation at Thetford. As noted in illustration captions, the Bardolf girl illustrated in the Ormesby Psalter may have been a sister of Elizabeth's son-in-law John Bardolf. Joan's uncle was Renaud de Bar, Bishop of Metz, owner of splendid manuscripts such as the Metz Pontifical, a link suggested as relevant to artist movements. Joan was entrusted with diplomatic tasks for the king, bridging the courts of England and France; she remained close to Queen Isabella, and engaged with the French court in exile; she lent a bible to the captive King John.³⁰

Marie de St Pol was also closely in touch with Isabella and Joan at this period, and her copy of the crusader stories of *Godefroy de Bouillon*, later in the French royal library, seems likely to have been another gift or loan to King John.³¹ A book of hours described in her will as a gift from the queen of Scotland is likely to have been given to her at this time, as Queen Joan of Scotland was staying with her mother Queen Isabella in the last months of her life.³² A breviary belonging to Marie which is now in the Cambridge University Library has charming margin illustrations including monkeys and a parrot with attendant; it was made in Paris c.1330–40. Marie's sister

Mahaut de Chatillon was a renowned book collector in France, and Marie went back and forth throughout her life. Recent commentary suggests that she may have been a significant figure in the circulation of books and trends.

One of Marie's building projects survives: a magnificent tomb in Westminster Abbey for her husband Aymer de Valence. It can be seen in the lower left corner of our illustration 3; just beyond is the chapel she endowed. She gave paintings and treasures, including an alabaster statue of the Virgin. These are lost, but commemorated in a modern wall plaque, and in a new alabaster statue of Our Lady of Pew.

Henry of Grosmont wrote a book of his own, at speed during an interlude in his busy military and diplomatic career. The *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* (*Book of Holy Medicines*) was published in translation only a few years ago, and this personal memoir is now described as a classic of literate spirituality. As well as being patron of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, he left a large bequest, matching one by his father, to the shrine at Walsingham.

Other patrons of splendid books now widely known and admired had connections to Elizabeth, although their interactions were probably less frequent than those with the close friends above.

Richard Fitzalan, third Earl of Arundel, the nephew and eventual heir of John de Warenne, is believed the most likely patron of the Macclesfield Psalter. There is speculation that it may have been made for Edmund Fitzalan, Richard's son by Elizabeth's niece Isabella Despenser whom he later divorced. Richard's second marriage was to Eleanor, a sister of Henry of Grosmont; in 1359 their son Richard and daughter Joan married Elizabeth and Humphrey, the children of Elizabeth's great friends the Earl and Countess of Northampton.³³

Robert Ufford, Earl of Suffolk, was a patron of Norwich Cathedral, and his arms appear in the last round of work on the Ormesby Psalter. As he was a great supporter of the arts, it has been suggested that he may have funded repairs to the book after the cathedral spire fell through the roof in 1362, directly on top of the stall where the book belonged, which would explain splits and water damage.³⁴ A regional magnate, his brother Ralph had married Elizabeth's widowed daughter-in-law Matilda, Countess of Ulster (another of Henry of Grosmont's sisters), and one of his daughters had married Elizabeth's grandson William Ferrers.

Turning back to Elizabeth's close friends, and to cousins featured in Jennifer Ward's essay, it may have been William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton who brought to England the *Romance of Alexander*,³⁵ made

in Flanders 1338–1344, with its lively musicians. His wife Countess Elizabeth commissioned the psalter now in Washington DC,³⁶ and left a generous bequest to the Blackfriars in Cambridge, a community known for exceptional learning. Their son Humphrey de Bohun, who married Joan Fitzalan, succeeded his uncle as 7th Earl of Hereford; this couple, and their daughters Eleanor and Mary, were all renowned book patrons.³⁷

The second quarter of the 14th century appears to have been a stimulating period for intellectual life in Cambridge, when it was closely engaged with scholarly trends on the continent, before the setback of personnel losses in the plague, and the eventual inward turn caused by war and the social upheaval of 1381. Elizabeth's friendships with figures such as the polymath theologian Thomas Bradwardine are intriguing, and I have been delighted to hear of new research and future publications which may shed more light on contemporary topics at the university. Arts, literature and philosophy were intertwined: the greatest expert on the Macclesfield Psalter has described it as Pythonesque, while noting that in his treatise on memory, 'Thomas Bradwardine recommended the use of wondrous, extreme, even shocking mental images for the effective memorizing and recalling of ideas'.³⁸

The survival rate for medieval textiles has been lower than for books; they are more fragile, and often less portable. Relatively few of the survivors have been matched with individual sponsors. The early history of the Pienza Cope, from which we have taken the detail on our back cover, is unknown. A Hospitaller in the design suggests a connection yet to be found, but the emphasis on the dragon-slaying St Margaret, the brave and eloquent St Catherine, and the facing down of kings, would have been relevant to a number of strong women in Elizabeth's circle, as well as to those who interacted with them. Some similarities have been noted between the paintings of the Queen Mary Psalter and the embroidery of the Pienza Cope.³⁹ In any case, given a work of such quality made in England at this time, we can be fairly confident that Elizabeth would have known the patron.

For gold and silver the survival rate has been even lower; it was often melted down and refashioned. Much was stolen from colleges and monasteries during the Reformation and Civil War; some was taken for safe keeping, and not all came back. The King John Cup has been owned by the town of Lynn since 1548, and again the early history is unknown. It has been dated c. 1340 on stylistic grounds, and its enamelled scenes include 12 women and 9 men equipped for the hunt and with musical instruments: it was made for enjoyment in a noble household, and not for the church.⁴⁰ Given local

legends of treasure in the baggage train lost in the marshes by King John of England in 1216, it has sometimes been assumed that the cup was mistakenly associated with this incident. There is, however, speculation that it may be associated with King John of France (Jean le Bon), who along with many of his nobles was detained in England from 1357 to 1360 and spent much time with the Dowager Queen Isabella. Her residence at Castle Rising is near Lynn; after her death in 1358, it passed to Edward the Black Prince. The Black Prince and his father had treated King John with demonstrative courtesy from the time of his capture at Poitiers, and during his captivity the English and French courts were striving to outdo each other in displays of chivalry, culture, and generosity.⁴¹ Recent research on this 'Anglo-French moment' suggests that Edward III enlisted his mother Queen Isabella to host her countrymen and to help with the peace process. It is easy to imagine a cup of this splendour as a royal gift – possibly to a local mayor or guildsmen, given the level of entertainment shown in the brass of the 'Peacock Feast', but more likely to royal or noble hosts with shared interests in hawking, hunting and the good life. The cup may have been made in England or on the continent, but it shows the exquisite craftsmanship of the luxury goods then in use at the best tables.

Elizabeth's friary at Walsingham was reduced to ruins during the Reformation, when the shrine was razed.⁴² Ely Cathedral, fortunately, remains magnificent. The savage destruction wrought by iconoclasts at Ely left enough in place to show us the magnitude of our loss, and the soaring and innovative architecture still lifts the spirits. Nowadays public tours allow access to Ely's Octagon Tower, building of which started soon after the 1322 collapse of its predecessor. Work would have been under way in 1326 when Queen Isabella was planning invasion, Elizabeth was strengthening her defences, and the future Clare College was being founded. The enormous timber beams of the Octagon were already 250 years old, so date from around the time of the Norman Conquest. A visit gives a feeling of time travel, apart from glorious views over the nave, roof pinnacles and fens. Prior Crauden and Alan of Walsingham are justifiably famous for their achievements at Ely; the knowledge that Elizabeth was helped by men of such talent as she planned her friary at Walsingham, and in touch with the projects at Westminster and Windsor of her cousin the king, gives us some appreciation of the losses we may have suffered at Walsingham. The Franciscan complex was designed for practical service to pilgrims and may not have been ostentatious. Since Elizabeth liked to work with designers, masons, carpenters

and goldsmiths working on the finest projects in the land, she would surely have ensured that it was beautiful.

Past, present, future

Frances Underhill's book intrigued me, not only for the stories of Elizabeth's life, but also for the light it cast on the detective work of archival research: the patient accumulation of evidence, the eye for connections and anomalies, and the possibilities of insights allowing convincing portraits and reconstructions to be drawn from the driest of source material. Jennifer Ward has a lifetime of experience with a broad range of the relevant household, administrative and legal records, and assures us that abundant scope remains for further exploration and discovery within these.

After decades overseas, I caught up belatedly with developments as exciting as the discovery of the Macclesfield Psalter, and of the context and conservation of the Thornham Parva retable,⁴³ and realised how much art historians have been contributing to studies of the same period. When I was growing up, the public caught only occasional glimpses of medieval illumination – usually behind dimly-lit and fingerprinted display glass, and one page-spread at a time unless during rebinding. The transformation resulting from digitisation is remarkable – the ability to inspect the hundreds of pages in each book, to zoom in, to check on remembered details and new associations, and to view comparable documents in distant museums from anywhere in the world. This must have been a huge boon to research, even though specialists will still wish to inspect originals. I discovered a wealth of fascinating analysis of individual manuscripts, and notice that fresh eyes and perspectives are uncovering new details and implications even in the well-studied. There are many more interesting documents on which I found nothing published at all, so there will doubtless be many more pleasures to come – and I am anticipating some from the research under way on the Psalter of Queen Philippa, dated c.1340, with musical notation for almost a hundred antiphons.⁴⁴ Elizabeth may well have known these, and since her statutes are very specific about the necessity for music in the services at her college, it is tempting to imagine such antiphons being sung there.

In her wonderful book on the Ormesby Psalter, Frederica Law-Turner has highlighted artistic interconnections and delights in multiple media: the churches of East Anglia teem with angels, animals and revellers in wood and stone, and a musical centaur could have trotted from the pages to take up its position in stained glass at Ringland. She has written of a spider's web of

artistic and aristocratic channels spreading over East Anglia and northern Europe, and of the potential for much more research. Queen Isabella and her friends Joan of Bar, Marie de St Pol, and Elizabeth de Burgh were at the heart of this web, as were several of Elizabeth's closest male friends, yet there are still accessible archives to be explored, and we are still discovering long-forgotten treasures on dusty shelves. The interweaving of art-historical, archival, and now musicological research holds the potential for many more discoveries: I look forward to reading and hearing.⁴⁵

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- 1 Edward III mentioned the needs of church and state in the preamble to the letters patent of 7 Oct 1337 for King's Hall: see Alan Cobban, *The King's Hall within the University of Cambridge in the later Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 13. Cobban also discusses the likelihood that the 'greet college, men clepen the Soler Halle at Canterbrigge' mentioned by Chaucer in the Reeve's Tale was the King's Hall, by far the largest and most influential college of the day: pp. 16–17.
 - 2 Perhaps not coincidentally, the statutes of Peterhouse were also revised at this time, 60 years after the original foundation. The Bishop of Ely who signed off in 1344 on new Peterhouse statutes was Simon de Montacute, the brother of Edward III's close friend William Montague, 1st Earl of Salisbury.
 - 3 C.N.L. Brooke, notes for the 650th anniversary exhibition of Gonville and Caius College, <http://www.cai.cam.ac.uk/650thanniversaryexhibition> accessed 12 August 2019.
 - 4 Parts of the Augustinian friary were excavated in 2016–17 before redevelopment of the New Museums Site; conservationists in the David Attenborough building were excited to have bird's eye views. Another large recent excavation tackled the medieval cemetery attached to St John's Hospital, an important institution in medieval times; analytical research is ongoing.
 - 5 A photograph of the Old Schools from the roof of King's College Chapel shows the medieval courtyard behind the 1750s neoclassical façade. Richard Newman and Christopher Evans, 'Archaeological investigations at the Old Schools, University of Cambridge', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, Vol 100 (2011), p. 195.
 - 6 Roland Harris, 'Clare College Cambridge, Old Court, Archaeological Assessment and Mitigation Strategy', report for Clare College, 2018. This report includes a map (Fig. 8, p. 16) showing the layout of the earlier buildings in relation to the present ones.
 - 7 Richard Newman, *The Former Master's Lodge and Great Hall, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Archaeological and Architectural Investigation*, Cambridge Archaeological Unit, 2009.
 - 8 Patronymics remain common today in other parts of the world, including Malaysia where I live, and where the name Zakri remains popular; I only belatedly recognised the variant spellings.

- 9 Confusingly, the most interesting map for medieval features on the HTA website is listed in the index as 'Cambridge in 1800'; there's another useful one on medieval hostels. These may be found at <http://www.historictownsatlases.org.uk/>
- 10 The clearest map that I have found of Cambridge in the 1350s, including the first eight colleges, religious establishments, and topography, is at <https://www.susannagregory.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/map1.jpg> – a website belonging to a writer of popular novels who has a Cambridge PhD and used to teach there; her real name is Elizabeth Cruwys. She adapted this from a map of Cambridge c.1500 in Damian Riehl Leader, *A History of the University of Cambridge: The University to 1546*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 12–13.
- 11 Confusingly, the present Clare College had been called Clare Hall for centuries, but changed its name in the 19th century. The foundation of Clare Hall is one of Clare College's proudest achievements. In 1965–66 it was also determined to raise the college's accomplishments and reputation in music, in which it certainly succeeded over the decades that followed, and a magnificent new organ was commissioned for Clare College Chapel. See Nicholas Temperley, *Musicians of Bath and Beyond: Edward Loder (1809–1865) and His Family*, Boydell & Brewer, 2016, pp. 291–292.
- 12 Clare College, King's and Churchill were the first of the formerly all-male colleges to admit women; the first intake was in 1972.
- 13 I am grateful to John Cherry, the former Keeper of the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities at the British Museum, who inspected the relevant casts at the Society of Antiquaries.
- 14 A 1912 catalogue for the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge describes a later *Agnus Dei* in a wooden frame, c.1566, other surviving examples from the C14th onwards, and the practice of keeping fragments in a metal case worn on the person. It also notes the indignation of the chronicler Matthew Paris, when fires in the church of St Albans c.1235 called into question the protective efficacy of the *Agnus Dei* at the top of the tower. (O.M. Dalton, *Fitzwilliam Museum McClean Bequest Catalogue*, Cambridge University Press, 1912, pp.118–19.) Another *Agnus Dei* was discovered in the foundations of the Castle of Poitiers, begun in 1375 by Jean de France, Duc de Berry. (Sergio Bertelli, *The King's Body: Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, transl. R. Burr Litchfield, Penn State Press, 2010, p. 137.)
- 15 The circular *Agnus Dei* with the lamb and flag in our seal section was drawn from the 14th-century stained glass at Merton College, Oxford (CVMA inv. no. 006355, dated c.1379–1406). This may be seen on the invaluable website of the Corpus Vitraeum Medii Aevi (CVMA), part of the international research project recording medieval stained glass, www.cvma.ac.uk.
- 16 One example is in the Book of Hours in the Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 231, dated c.1325–1330. Folio 2r shows St John the Evangelist, identified by name on a scroll held by his eagle and holding a long feather, in apparent discussion with St John the Baptist holding an *Agnus Dei*. The calligrapher

- Patricia Lovett has explained that large feathers were required, for the barrel size needed to cut a good nib: these came from swans or geese (from the left wing for a right-handed scribe, and vice versa), trimmed down for balance.
- 17 It was assumed at this period that St John the Apostle was the same person as St John the Evangelist, and as St John the Divine, author of Revelations.
- 18 The inscription is unfortunately mistranscribed, as ‘Aulā Clare piā rege semper Virgo Maria’, in the two books most accessible for reference at Clare College: Mansfield Forbes, *Clare College 1326–1926*, Cambridge University Press, 1928; and E. Alfred Jones, *Catalogue of the Plate of Clare College*, Cambridge University Press, 1939. The seal inscription has a macron in ‘Aulā’ but none in ‘piā’, and was correctly recorded in 18th and 19th century references, and the 18th century copy-seal. The best description is by William St John Hope, ‘The Seals of the Colleges and of the University of Cambridge’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 1885, pp. 225–52; four Clare College seals, including a seal for the Master made in 1742 and a small one for sealing certificates, are described on pp. 233–4. Our main point of difference is that Hope did not identify St John the Evangelist, recording ‘St John the Baptist and another male saint who holds a palm branch’. Hope describes the commissioning of the 18th-century seal for use in a press, and thought that the ‘most beautiful seal’ of 1359 had then been disused. Walter de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Vol. 2, 1887, p. 33, refers to the earlier work by Hope and adds a tentative identification of ‘St John the Evangelist? with an eagle and a palm branch’; he dropped the question mark for a brief description in Birch, *Seals*, New York, Putnam, 1907. There is also a drawing by George Vertue c.1720–21 in *Vetusta Monumenta*, The Society of Antiquaries of London, Vol 1, Plate 5. This is the earliest of the records seen, but not very accurate, and probably drawn from memory or from incomplete notes. It is accompanied by new commentary by Laura Whatley for plate 1.5 of *Vetusta Monumenta: Ancient Monuments, A Digital Edition*, 2018.
- 19 The Peterhouse statutes of 1344 prescribed the use of Latin during meals, with occasional French permissible, and English to be used only rarely.
- 20 See, for example, David L. Mearns et al., ‘An Early Portuguese Mariner’s Astrolabe from the Sodrē Wreck-site, Al Hallaniyah, Oman’, *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, (2019) 00.0: 1–12.
- 21 Birch, *Catalogue*, Vol 2, item 7940, citing William Chaffers, *Gilda Aurifabrorum*, 1883: ‘minute letters which appear to be T. O. A. S., thus constituting the name of T(H)OMAS, perhaps in reference to Thomas Hessey or Thomas Raynham, goldsmiths to Edward III’.
- 22 William St John Hope, *Heraldry for Craftsmen & Designers*, London, John Hogg, 1913.
- 23 Parts of Elizabeth’s castles remain standing at Clare and at Usk, and extensive ruins of the friary at Walsingham. Only foundations remain from her buildings at Clare College; stonework with the college arms now embedded in the corridor wall opposite the hall is thought to be medieval but dated to

- the 15th century. An ironbound pine wood chest at Clare College has been tentatively dated to the early 15th century, due to similarities of style with others carbon-dated. It is thought to have been imported from Germany or Poland and might have been used as a loan chest, containing books and other pledged items, or for college assets. Christopher Pickvance, 'Report on Clare's medieval loan chest', in Ed Potten, *Clare College Fellows' Library: Historical Survey and Recommendations*, privately circulated, 2018.
- 24 'Elizabeth de Burgh: Connoisseur and Patron' in June Hall McCash (ed.), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 266–87; Elizabeth's breadth of interests p. 267, extra horses p. 273.
- 25 In 1290, the year of her death, Eleanor ordered goods from Roger of Acre: Benjamin Arbel, *Intercultural Contacts in the Medieval Mediterranean*, London, Frank Cass, 1996, p. 103.
- 26 Anne Rudloff Stanton, 'The psalter of Isabelle, Queen of England 1308–1330: Isabelle as the audience', *Word & Image*, 18(4) (2002), pp. 1–27.
- 27 Writing a quarter-century ago, Michael Michael found it necessary to explain that studying the images can give insights inaccessible on reading written records alone; that point now seems very well proven. Michael Michael, 'The Iconography of Kingship in the Walter of Milemete Treatise', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 57 (1994), pp. 35–47. On the role of imagery in conceptualisation, communication, and subtle or scathing commentary in dangerous times, see Laura Slater, *Art & Political Thought in Medieval England c.1150–1350*, The Boydell Press, 2018 – and if interested in works of comparable beauty from a similar age and very different place, Alfreda Murck, *Poetry and Painting in Song China: The Subtle Art of Dissent*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2000.
- 28 Anne Rudloff Stanton, 'The Queen Mary Psalter: A Study of Affect and Audience', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Philadelphia, 2001. A case that the Taymouth Hours was made for Isabella was noted by Suzanne Lewis, 'The Apocalypse of Isabella of France: Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS Fr. 13096', *The Art Bulletin*, June 1990, Vol LXXII no.2, p. 234 n.61, and supported by Anne Rudloff Stanton, 'Isabelle of France and her Manuscripts, 1308–1358', in Nolan K. (ed.), *Capetian Women*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. More recently it has been suggested that the Taymouth Hours could have been commissioned by Queen Philippa for the king's sister Eleanor of Woodstock (Kathryn A. Smith, *The Taymouth Hours, Stories and the Construction of the Self in Late Medieval England*, London, British Library, 2012). It has also been suggested that the Taymouth Hours may have been among the books bequeathed by Isabella to her daughter Joan, Queen of Scotland, or commissioned by Isabella as a gift for Joan.
- 29 For a summary of Isabella's book borrowing from the royal library, her personal collection at death, and the return of books from King John: Lewis, 1990, pp. 233–4.
- 30 Michael Bennett, 'France in England: Anglo-French Culture in the Reign of Edward III', in J. Wogan-Browne (ed.), *Language and Culture in Medieval*

- Britain: the French of England c.1100–c.1500*, York Medieval Press, 2009, pp.320–33. Also relevant: Michael Bennett, 'Isabelle of France, Anglo-French diplomacy and Cultural Exchange in the Late 1350s', in J.S. Bothwell (ed.), *The Age of Edward III*, York, 2001, pp. 215–25.
- 31 Michael Bennett, 'Mandeville's Travels and the Anglo French Moment', *Medium Aevum* 75 (2), 2006, pp. 273–92. This paper describes Marie as 'a patron of letters and learning', who 'may have had a more impressive library than Queen Isabelle' although no evidence is provided for the latter.
- 32 Sean Field, 'Marie of Saint-Pol and her Books', *English Historical Review*, Vol CXXV No.513, 2010.
- 33 Stella Panayotova, *The Macclesfield Psalter*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2008, p. 49.
- 34 Frederica Law-Turner, *The Ormesby Psalter*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, 2017, pp. 98–100.
- 35 *The Romance of Alexander*: Bodleian MS 264.
- 36 *The Psalter of Elizabeth, Countess of Northampton*, previously known as the *Dominican Astor Psalter*, formerly in the Bodleian, now at the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC.
- 37 Joan in 1397 left a missal and breviary to her grandson Henry, who later became King Henry V; he kept them for life, as they are mentioned in his own will. Lynda Dennison, 'The Stylistic Sources, Dating and Development of the Bohun Workshop, c.1340–1400', Westfield College, University of London, PhD thesis, 1988, p. 260.
- 38 Stella Panayotova, *The Macclesfield Psalter*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2008, p. 14.
- 39 Glyn Davies in *English Medieval Embroidery, Opus Anglicanum*, Victoria and Albert Museum / Yale University Press, 2016, p. 209.
- 40 The King John Cup may be seen in the galleries of the Town Hall at King's Lynn, and is well worth a special trip; it is now beautifully displayed and I have been unable to find photographs or drawings of the decorative details elsewhere. The fullest description I have seen is the catalogue entry in *Age of Chivalry, Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, Royal Academy of Arts, 1987, pp. 435–6. This contains the intriguing information that the top can be detached and used as a beaker. Great design!
- 41 'John led the way in artistic patronage and the dissemination of the latest fashions and new technologies.' Neil Murphy, *The Captivity of John II, 1356–60: The Royal Image in Later Medieval England*, New York, Springer, 2016.
- 42 The ruins of Elizabeth's friary at Walsingham require an appointment to visit, unlike those of the Augustinian priory, and the surviving Slipper Chapel. For the friary, see Stephen Heywood, 'The Greyfriars, Little Walsingham: History and Significance of the remains of the Friary', report for Norfolk Historic Environment Service, 2014.
- 43 I had pored over many photographs and all available research of the Thornham Parva retable and the matching altar frontal in the Musée de Cluny, but nothing prepared me for walking in from the Suffolk countryside and

seeing this great national treasure glittering across the whole width of the tiny thatched church. This alone would have been worth the trip from Asia.

- 44 Research by Dr Laura Slater, the author of *Art & Political Thought in Medieval England*; part of a project on Music And Late Medieval European Court Cultures (MALMECC) at the University of Oxford.
- 45 For the Feast of the Annunciation 2020, as the world battled the COVID-19 pandemic and the Catholic church rededicated England as the 'Dowry of Mary', celebrations at Walsingham and Westminster were broadcast online. The podcast from Westminster came from the tiny Chapel of Our Lady of Pew, just north of the shrine of King Edward the Confessor. The boy king Richard II, son of the Black Prince, prayed in the Abbey before riding out to face the Peasants' Revolt. Here too, he dedicated England as 'Dowry of Mary' (Dos Mariae), near the chapels and shrines of St John the Baptist, St Edward the Confessor, and St Edmund - an event commemorated in the Wilton Diptych. He prayed in a tiny chapel, and his white hart emblem is painted here. The slightly earlier wall paintings may well have been commissioned by Marie de St Pol: this is thought to have been the chapel which she endowed and furnished. When Richard prayed, he may have been kneeling before the alabaster statue of the Virgin which Marie had donated. The address for the 2020 podcast was by the Canon Theologian Jamie Hawkey, formerly Dean of Clare College, and the reading by his wife Carol. Pembroke and Clare, Westminster and Walsingham, Ely and Windsor: the interconnections influencing the great friendship and various projects of the Lady of Clare and the Countess of Pembroke reverberate to this day.