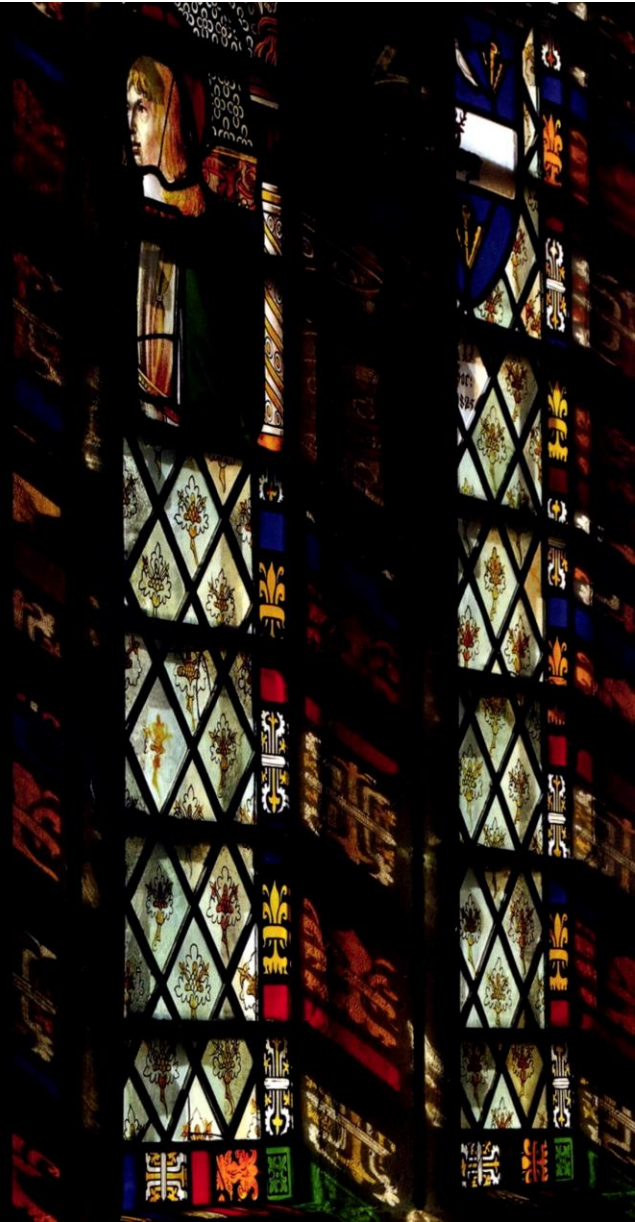


THE  
STAINED  
GLASS  
WINDOWS  
OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL



## Sample pages



### The glaziers and the problem of attribution

Details of some of the painted heads from the north side of the Chapel showing the work of different artists in windows 1, 2, 5 and 6.

The creation of a stained glass window during the middle ages was a collaborative effort. The primary goal of the medieval craftsmen involved in the decoration of the Chapel was to create a series of windows which celebrated the great glory of the Almighty and provided the Chapel with a visually harmonious ensemble. Nevertheless, given that several names of individual glaziers have been preserved in the documents, there is a natural temptation to assign different windows – or similar sections of each window – to the hand of an individual master.

The first attempt to attribute specific portions of the glass to named masters was made by Kenneth Harrison, in his 1952 guide to the Chapel. He associated the 'best' section of certain panels – especially heads and hands – with the master glazier known to be working at the Chapel during a specific phase of the decoration. Harrison also contributed the two chapters on attribution in Hilary Wylmott's 1972 monograph on the Chapel glass. As the exact chronology of the completion of the windows and the styles of the individual masters has not, and perhaps never can be pinned down with certainty, any such attributions can only ever be conjectural. Nevertheless, it is interesting to identify a number of distinct artistic personalities in the different details of the glass. For this reason, Harrison's and Wylmott's attributions are noted in the following text as interesting possibilities, rather than firm conclusions.



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### Glass-making in the middle ages

In order to appreciate more fully the degree of skill and artistry that went into the manufacture of the windows, a few words about the process of glass-making might be welcome.

As with so many other large-scale endeavours of the middle ages, glass-making was a process involving several teams of skilled craftsmen. The subject matter for such an important set of windows most likely would have been provided by a learned advisor such as the programme for the Kings Chapel glass being set out by the eminent churchman, Richard Fox. This document, with varying levels of detail, would have been passed to an artist, who would act as the senior designer and provide the series of compositional drawings for approval by the client, known as a *viduus*. These drawings would have been enlarged or 'scaled-up' and transferred on to heavyweight paper so that they fitted the correct scale and proportions of the window, thereby creating a full-size template or 'cartoon'. Successful figures or details from one cartoon would often be re-used more than once in a series of windows. In the King's Chapel glass, for example, several of the 'Heresy' scenes have been composed using the same cartoon.

Most of the glass used for large-scale windows in England during this period was imported from Continental Europe. So-called 'Neman' glass originated in modern-day Germany and

was shipped via the River Rhine and the Netherlands into the North Sea. Glass made in lower Burgundy or Normandy was transported through Rouen into the English Channel. Almost all the glass would have been originally blown into a long cylindrical shape, called a 'truff', which had to be cut open once it had cooled and flattened into a rectangular pane by reheating. The final size of the glass depended on the capacity of the glassblower's lungs, usually measuring about 240 x 175 mm.

The glass came in three types: 1) white – or clear – glass; 2) potmetal glass, which was molten white glass to which different combinations of metallic compounds had been added to the 'pot' in order to achieve a range of colours; and 3) flashed glass. Since many of the potential colours were too dark to allow light to penetrate through them, glaziers would dip the ends of their blow-pipes into the coloured potmetal and then into clear white glass to lighten the shade. This technique produced 'flashed' glass.

The glazier would then select the kind of glass he needed and set it on the scaled-up cartoon, in order to cut it to the right shape. Once cut, the glass would be painted with a combination of iron or copper oxide, powdered glass ('flit') and a binding gum made from dried urine and diluted with vinegar. Decorative details and highlights were achieved by throwing the laser of paint through scraping, brushing or stippling

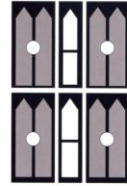
Three stages of making a glass window. The upper image shows the cut lines which get used to shape and fit the pieces of potmetal glass so they will come most efficiently fit together. The middle image shows how the cheap glass or glass pane to be flung. The bottom image shows the final section of the window with each section of glass firmly held between lead strips, which are soldered together at the points where they meet.



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### Understanding the content of the windows

Representation of the Virgin and The Golden Rule offered to Apollo from a Netherlands blockbook of the 15th century, showing the work of different artists in windows 1, 2, 5 and 6.



All the great windows running down the north and south sides of the Chapel follow the same structural format. In essence, there are five tall, vertical lights arranged into an upper and a lower row. The central panels are further divided to form four vertical sections. Each of the four sets of flanking panels (coloured grey in the diagram) contains a single 'story', which according to the conventions of medieval and Renaissance painting, may contain a series of episodes within the same composition.

Whereas the structure of the windows offered a number of challenges in terms of creating visually harmonious compositions, they provided the ideal format for the



presentation of the old law and of the new law. A recurring theme in early Christian theology and Biblical exegesis is the belief that there is a deep link between the events related in the Old and New Testaments. At its simplest, certain passages or phrases in the Old Testament were interpreted as being symbolically connected to the New Testament, thereby showing how the Prophets and sages had prophesied the coming of Christ. At its most extreme, however, it was thought that a number of events described in the Old Testament, known as 'types', were actual prefigurations of events or actions surrounding the life of Christ, the 'antitype'. For example, the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam, was the 'type' for the creation of the Church

(ecclesia) from the wound in Christ's side, the 'antitype' or the episode of Jonah being swallowed by a whale was the 'type' for Christ's descent into Limbo. In most cases, the 'types' were drawn from the Old Testament, but there are examples when they have been taken from classical history or even pagan mythology.

During the middle ages, the better-known typological pairings were collected, illustrated and preserved in instructional works such as the *Biblia Pauperum* ('The Poor Man's Bible') and the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* ('The Mirror of Human Salvation'). The majority of the scenes in the great windows have been drawn directly from this tradition and some

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## Window 2



1. A Golden Table offered to Apollo  
Pausanias, *Life of Solon*
2. The Marriage of Tobias and Sarah  
Tobit 7: 13-14
3. The presentation of the Virgin  
Speusippus, *Homoiotei Solutioes*
4. The Marriage of the Virgin to Joseph  
Matthew 1 and Luke 1

This is the first typological window. In the upper left, the pagan tale of two fishermen dedicating a golden table they had found in their nets to the sun-god Apollo is featured as the 'type' for the lower left scene, in which Joachim and Anna present their seven-year-old daughter at the temple.

The marriage of the Old Testament figure of Sarah in the upper right prefigures that of Mary to Joseph in the lower right. The focus here is on Mary's virginity as Sarah had been wed seven times before her marriage to Tobias, but she remained a virgin regardless.

Stylistically, this window is unlike any of the others in the slight vertical elongation of the figures and the codes: more slanting lines of the glass. It dates to the first period of glazing, between 1515-17. Comparisons with other works of art suggests that the glazer came from a generation of slightly older artists trained in the Netherlands and helps to explain why his characteristic style – as well as the diaphanous forms featuring a number of half-length figures set in niches along the bottom of each set of scenes – does not re-appear in any of the later glazing.



## North Chapel B (B – The Rotherham Chapel)

The Chapel was the original site for the series of medieval windows depicting the Old Testament Prophets, which appear to have been installed some time around 1485. Since then, however, a chimney was installed in the northwest corner of the Chapel, only to be replaced in 1986-87 by an emergency exit door.

The installation of the glass in this Chapel was funded in 1999 by Dr George (Dadie) Filkins, a Fellow of King's College from 1927-99, to commemorate the care devoted to the Chapel during the twenty previous years by Hilary Wymont. Wymont (1912-2005) began his association with King's as chorister in the choir school and returned as a scholar in 1931. Following a successful career with the British Council, he became advisor to the College for its stained glass in 1973 and successfully continued Dean Milner-White's quest to secure the finest medieval glass for the Chapel.



Fig. 10. The glass in the Chapel was funded in 1999 by Dr George (Dadie) Filkins, a Fellow of King's College from 1927-99, to commemorate the care devoted to the Chapel during the twenty previous years by Hilary Wymont. Wymont (1912-2005) began his association with King's as chorister in the choir school and returned as a scholar in 1931. Following a successful career with the British Council, he became advisor to the College for its stained glass in 1973 and successfully continued Dean Milner-White's quest to secure the finest medieval glass for the Chapel.



Fig. 11. The glass in the Chapel was funded in 1999 by Dr George (Dadie) Filkins, a Fellow of King's College from 1927-99, to commemorate the care devoted to the Chapel during the twenty previous years by Hilary Wymont. Wymont (1912-2005) began his association with King's as chorister in the choir school and returned as a scholar in 1931. Following a successful career with the British Council, he became advisor to the College for its stained glass in 1973 and successfully continued Dean Milner-White's quest to secure the finest medieval glass for the Chapel.

