

AN INTRODUCTION TO
KING'S
COLLEGE
CHAPEL



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The sculptural decoration

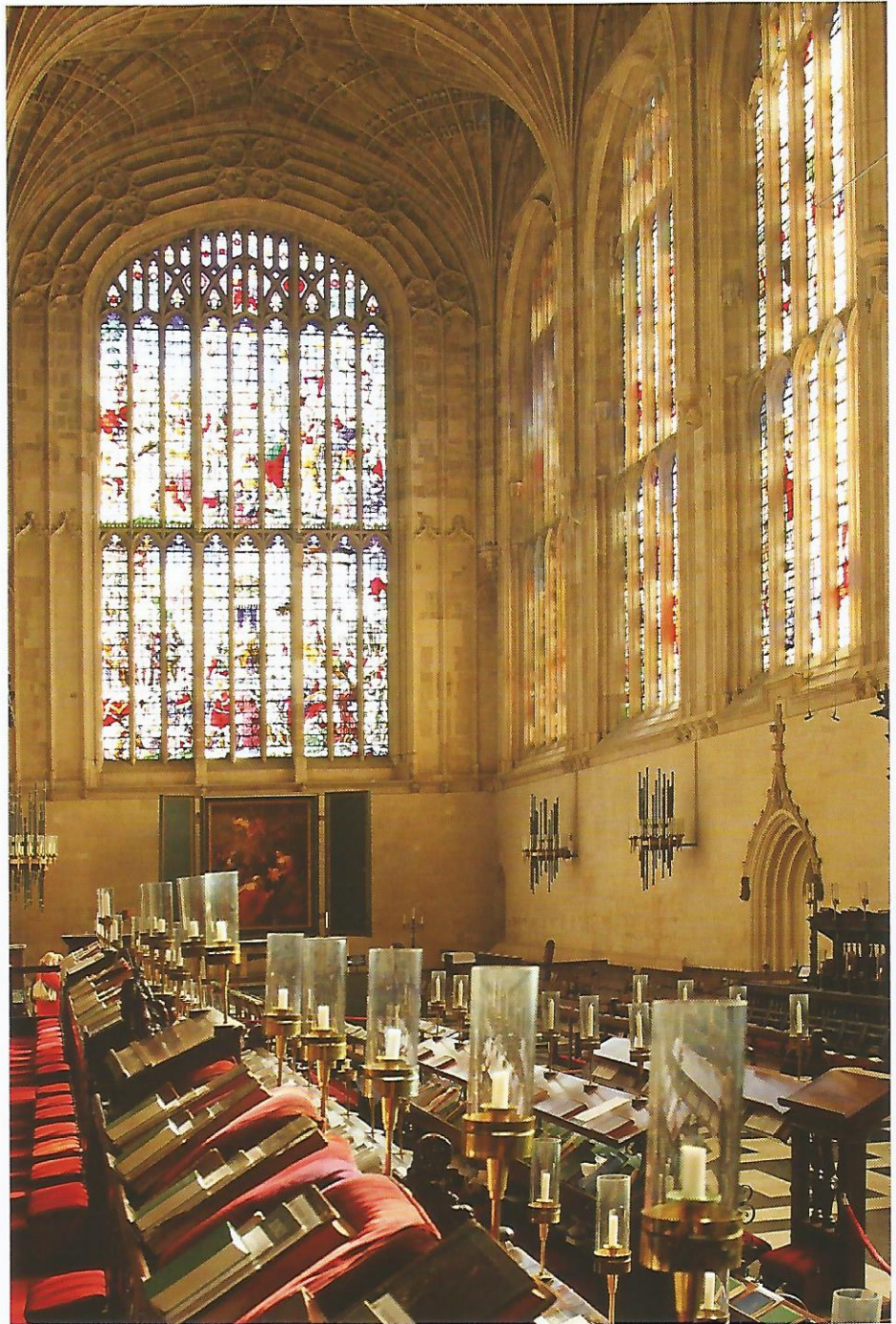
The style of Henry VI (c. 1448-76)

In his '*wille and entent*', Henry VI stipulated that the interior of his Chapel should be:

in large fourme, clene and substantial; but setting apart superfluite of too great werkes of entaille and busy moldyng.

In essence, he wanted a simple, grand statement, unencumbered with superfluous and busy decorative details.

The sculptural decoration of the east end of the Chapel suitably reflects Henry VI's wishes. The walls have been left fairly plain, with only a restrained line of decorative half-angels holding attributes running along the string course, just beneath the lintels of the Great Windows.



A view towards the east end of the Chapel, showing the simpler style of Henry VI's taste.



North Chapel 2

H – The Founder's Chapel; formerly the Goade Chapel

This side-chapel was dedicated to Roger Goade, who was Provost of King's College from 1569 until his death in 1610. As such, it was lavishly decorated with his initials and coat of arms. Now, however, only a single, damaged section of the original glass survives.

The side-chapel was refurbished in 1930-32 and its dedication changed to commemorate the Founder of the College, Henry VI.

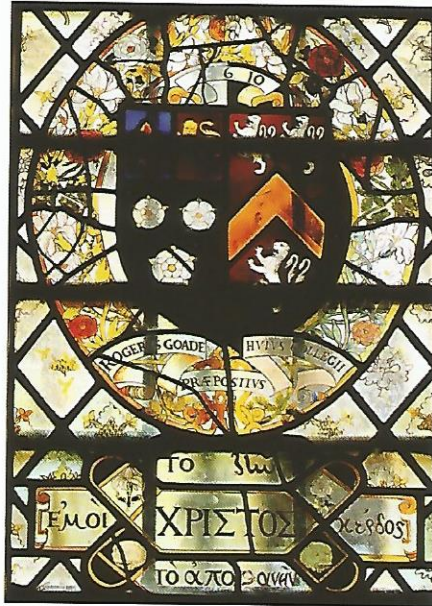
There are six important Tudor badges in the screen between the side-chapel and the Antechapel, dating from the mid-sixteenth century. They include the badges of two of Henry's VIII's wives: the slit pomegranate of his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, and the half-figure of a queen arising from the seeds of the Union Rose, which was granted to Catherine Parr on her marriage to Henry VIII in 1543.

The altarpiece represents three scenes from the early life of Christ. In the left panel, *The Nativity of Christ with The Adoration of the Shepherds*; in the middle panel, *The Adoration of the Magi*; and in the right panel, *The Flight into Egypt*. The painting has been attributed to the sixteenth-century Antwerp-based 'Master of the Groote Annunciation'. It dates to c. 1515-20 and was given to the College by PK. ('Sunny') Pal, KC 1955, and his family in 2010.

Facing the altar is the large painting of the *Deposition of Christ from the Cross* by the sixteenth-century Roman painter, Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta. It was painted c. 1568-73 and given to the College by Frederick, 5th Earl of Carlisle, KC 1764, in 1780. It was placed on the High Altar of the Chapel from that date until the remodelling of the Choir by Detmar, Blow & Billerey in 1911.



Attributed to the 'Master of the Groote Annunciation', *Triptych with scenes from the early Life of Christ*, c. 1515-20.



Panel with the coat of arms of Roger Goade, which combines his own family arms with those of the College and is surrounded with a wreath of roses and lilies, alluding to his education, first at Eton and then at King's. The piece is dated 1610 (the year of Goade's death).



Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta, *The Deposition of Christ from the Cross*, c. 1568-73.

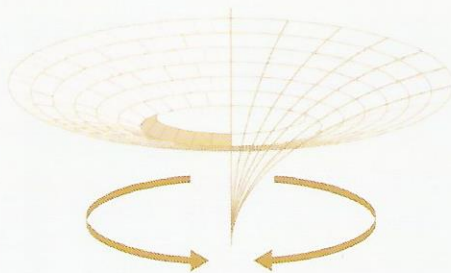
The structure of a fan vault

A fan vault is, essentially, half of a simple arch that has been rotated around one of its external axes in order to form a conoid, or cone-like, shape. The ribs of the vault are all of an equal curvature and spaced at regular intervals down the length of the cone.

In King's Chapel, a series of quarter-conoid arches are arranged in rows, with their fans spreading inward to the centre of the bay. One side of each quarter-conoid rests against a transverse arch that spans the width of the ceiling. The other side abuts the inner side of its adjacent quarter-conoid, so that the ribs of one shape flow into the next. Flat spandrels are inserted to bridge the spaces between the conoid forms.

The construction ensures that the weight of the structure is transferred through the cones of the vaulting outwards to the eleven great buttresses on either side of the nave and to the corner towers. The external thrust passes back upwards through the cones and across the vault, where it is balanced by the boss, which acts like a keystone.

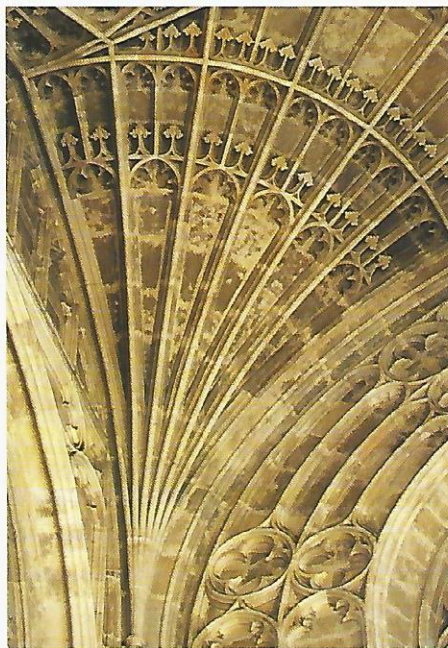
To provide an idea of the kind of force that is being exerted back upwards through the abutments to the keystone in the vaults of King's College Chapel, it should be noted that each of the large stone bosses, placed in the meeting points of the transverse ridges, weighs approximately one ton.



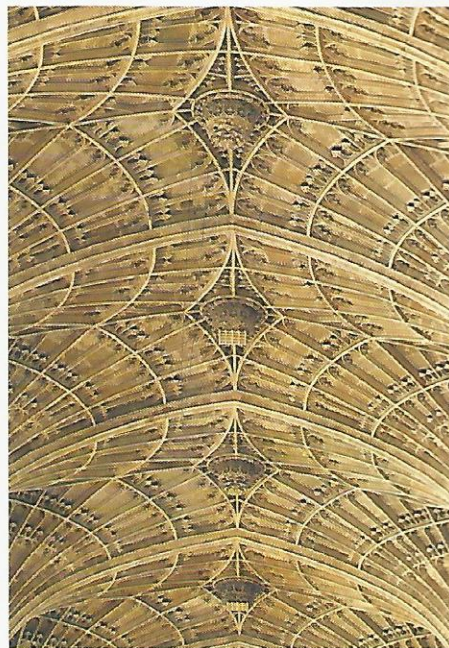
Rotating half of a simple arch to form the section of a fan vault.



The form of the transverse arch.



A quarter-conoid from the Chapel vault.



The series of transverse arches marking each bay of the vault.

