

TEN CARMELITE ROUNDELS AT QUEENS' COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

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Medieval English roundels in stained glass seem to have been produced in groups more often than singly. Most of them in fact belong to numerical series: the four Evangelists, the Seven Sacraments or the Seven Works of Mercy, the Twelve Apostles or the Twelve Labours of the Months; and from these sets more than one roundel usually survives. By far the largest group, numbering 23 roundels, came from a merchant's house in Leicester, and includes for instance a complete set of the Seven Sacraments¹. At Checkley Church, Staffordshire, there are seven Labours of the Months²; At Greystoke in Cumbria the so-called Bestiary window contains nine roundels: three show eagles encircled by a scroll with the inscription *O Sanna O Sanna O Sanna O Sanna*, and others have an antelope, an ass, a mongoose, a phoenix, a caladrius (so-called), and a Trinity shield³. Thus the group of ten Carmelites at Queens' College, though they are by no means all in pristine condition, is nevertheless in all probability the largest coherent set of English medieval roundels extant (Figs 1-10). Like the Leicester collection they are not far from their original site. They do not form or derive from a numerical group, and they may perhaps be the survivors of an even larger series. Despite their inevitable conformity to a

¹ Information on the English roundel in general, and on the series at Checkley and Greystoke in particular, has been generously supplied by Kerry Ayre: cf. K. Ayre, 'English figurative stained glass roundels produced before 1530', *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters* XIX, 1 (1989-90) pp. 1-17.

² G. McN. Rushforth, 'An account of some painted glass from a house at Leicester', *Archaeological Journal* XV (1918) pp. 47-68. Alice Hamilton, 'Orthodoxy in late fifteenth-century glass at Leicester', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society* LV (1980) pp.22-37, stresses the close links between the component sets.

³ See n. 1.

type they are of outstanding interest.

The Old Library of Queens' College is on the north side of the original mid-fifteenth-century courtyard, and on the first floor. Five northern windows which give onto land occupied until 1538 by the Carmelite Priory contain a roundel in each light. Each one measures about 22 cm in diameter ($8\frac{5}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ in.) and is painted and stained; a pearled border about 2 cm wide encircles a foliated background against which is set the head, full-face, or more often in three-quarter view, of a young or middle-aged friar, with just enough of his shoulders to reveal the thick folds of his white mantle and hood. Each wears a plain straight-sided cap, which is clearly intended to be black, though in five roundels it has entirely or almost entirely worn away⁴. In three of these (nos 2, 3 and 9) the features themselves are dim, and in one (no. 4), which has clearly at some stage been reversed so that the paint was exposed to the weather, the head is to all intents and purposes a blank. The roundels are here numbered from left to right, starting at the west end of the north wall of the Old Library; the easternmost window, which contains two heads in fine condition, gives onto a staircase.

Several different hands are discernible in the heads. Nos 7 and 9 are from the same design, and so probably are nos 2 and 6; these four are by the same glass-painter. The roundel with the washed-out head (no. 4) differs notably from the others in having a narrow border with about 40 pearled features instead of about 30, and a different background pattern. Ears are uniform in their stylisation (with the exception of the full-face head in no. 8, and no doubt the washed-out no. 4). For no. 2, rather surprisingly, a defective piece of glass has been used, and no. 10 has been made up of two distinct pieces, the joining lead being used to define the head itself, as it would be in a full-sized panel.

The roundels are placed above eye level in lights measuring on average 1.5 by 0.44 m. (59 in. high by $17\frac{3}{8}$ in. wide) against a background of figured quarries, within borders consisting of diamond features with overlapping sides, of a form found com-

⁴ The shape is rare, but can be seen e.g. in an illumination of William of Nottingham's Commentary on the Four Gospels, Oxford Bod. Lib. MS Laud. Misc. 165 f. 5, dated 1397; ill. in M. Rickert *The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal* (London 1952) Plate XLIII.

monly in English mid-fifteenth-century windows, alternating with small rectangular pieces of blue or ruby glass (Fig. 11). At the foot of six lights are fragmentary inscriptions, of which more will be said later on.

The roundel form is of course well suited to the head or head-and-shoulders figure, and is in fact an indigenous *genre*⁵. At least 30 survive from the early fourteenth century and the first three quarters of the fifteenth, all painted and stained. In Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire, there are seven roundels distributed over the east window, with the heads of kings, bishops, a saint, and a man with a cap⁶. These are thought to date from c. 1320, soon after the introduction of yellow stain. Of about the same date are the SS John and Thomas (with their attributes of spear and palm), no doubt from a set of Apostles, which form part of the Philip Nelson Collection at the Liverpool Museum (Fig. 12). The large collection of over 30 fourteenth- and fifteenth-century roundels at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, is especially interesting: out of 13 head-and-shoulders (or at least head-and-neck) roundels several represent men in secular dress, or kings, including one whose young head is ringed by a stained border so that the background forms a halo: no doubt St Edward, King and Martyr. Two other heads represent Dominican saints; they share the same style and the same diaper background; they must belong to the same later-fifteenth-century set, and may indeed have formed a pair. One, turning to his right, with his head cleft by a sword, is clearly St Peter Martyr; the other, turning to his left (Fig. 13), may well be intended to represent St Dominic. Of all English head-and-shoulders roundels, however, the closest in composition to those in Queens College is the mid-fifteenth-century bust of St Edmund, with invocation in Latin, within a twisted cable border, from Hardwicke Hall, Bury St Edmund's, and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Fig. 14)⁷.

⁵ This paragraph is based on a collection of photographs of English head and head-and-shoulders roundels, which were kindly lent by Kerry Ayre.

⁶ P.A. Newton, *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, The County of Oxford* (London 1979) p. 79.

⁷ C. 111-1924. B. Rackham, *Victoria and Albert Museum, Department of Ceramics, A Guide to the Collections of Stained Glass* (London 1936) p. 59 and Plate 15A.

The quarries that serve as a background to the roundels in Queens are almost all of a single pattern, representing a slip with a complicated flower not likely to be found in nature (Figs 15 and 16). The rare exceptions include two examples of the standard quarry used in King's College Chapel from about 1460 to the time of Constable and Co. four centuries later. This is thought to represent the yellow iris. The examples illustrated in Fig. 17 come from the southeast side-chapel of King's, which must have been finished before 1473; on the 5th January of that year there was a burial in a chapel on the south side of 'the new collegiate church'⁸, which implies that it was already glazed. Since the order of building was in general from the east towards the west, the southeast chapel, even if not the one referred to, will have been completed by this time. The quarries illustrated must be in their original position, since the glass is shaped to fit the cinquefoil head of the light, with painted lines taking here and there the place of leading. The standard quarries in Queens' Old Library correspond very closely with the King's College examples not only in composition but in style, and can be dated between 1470 and 1500, together with the roundels they encase. The arrangement of the glass in these ten lights seems likely, with certain exceptions, to reproduce that of the original installation in some part of the Carmelite Priory, most probably the cloister windows⁹. The cinquefoil heads of the lights in Queens' have not infrequently been filled in with fragments, sometimes of plain glass, suggesting that some of the windows in which they originally stood were pointed, like the mid-fifteenth-century windows in the south wall of the Library, from which the cusping was scraped away during the eighteenth century¹⁰; quite a few quarries have been inserted

⁸ R. Willis and J.W. Clark, *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge and the Colleges of Cambridge and Eton* (Cambridge 1886) I p.489.

⁹ B. Zimmerman, (Benoît-Marie de la Croix), 'Les Carmes aux universités du moyen âge', *Études Carmélitaines* (1932) p. 97 gives this as their origin, but without specifying his source. The cloister is thought to have stood at the northwest angle of the Chapel on the north of the site, and to have had a wooden frame. In November 1929 the Slade Professor, E.S. Prior, found signs of burning there (letter to Fr Zimmerman dated 4.11.29, in Carmelite Priory, London, Zimmerman Papers, file 17). See also n.36.

¹⁰ Willis and Clark (1886) II pp. 11 and 51-2.

upside down, especially half-quarries at the top of the lower panels, and in a few cases, notably in the casement of light 8, contemporary quarries of other patterns have been introduced. These last, and indeed other strays, are more likely to have been put in when the glass was re-erected in Queens' College than at a later re-leading.

Although the glass is almost certainly from a Cambridge workshop, a Norwich influence can be discerned in the furrowed cheek and jaw of nos 1 and 6; the same stylisation is to be seen, for example, in the faces of two donors at East Harling¹⁰: Sir Robert Wingfield (Fig. 18) and Sir William Chamberlain¹¹. The shading in the Carmelite figures, however, is more skilfully handled, and their expression is livelier and more realistic.

The characteristic broadening of the furrow in the upper lip (nos 4-10) is a trait found in fifteenth-century heads as far apart as Essex, Somerset and York.

The history of the Carmelites is full of contradictions: between the contemplative and the active life, between the grotto and the town, between the stardom of legendary founders and a cult of group anonymity for the community itself¹². There is no document earlier than the thirteenth century that attests the existence of a Carmelite community, in the strict sense. At some time between 1206 and 1214 the then Patriarch of Jerusalem, Albert of Verceil, wrote a letter to a certain B (later named as Brocard) proposing a mixed rule of solitude and community for the Brothers of Our Lady of Carmel in the valley of Elijah's well at the foot of the mountain. The brothers were to have no private possessions, to be governed by a Prior, to work with their hands, mostly in solitude, and to live a life of abstinence, with long periods of fasting. This purely contemplative rule, despite a decision by the Lateran Council in 1215 to forbid the creation of new orders, was recognised in 1226 by Honorius III;

¹¹ David King, *Stained Glass Tours around Norfolk Churches* (The Norfolk Society 1974) p.29.

¹² J. Smet, *The Carmelites, A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel I*, Darien (Illinois) 1975.

nevertheless only three years later Gregory IX, following the rise of the Dominicans and Franciscans, admitted the Carmelites among the *mendicant* orders, thus establishing a contradiction that was to dog them for the rest of the century between their eremitic tradition and the more active role in which they were now to be cast.

It was not long before the brothers were faced with an urgent choice between leaving for the west and martyrdom at the hands of the Saracens, who, after destroying offshoots of the order at Tyre, Sarepta, Antioch and Jerusalem, in 1291 uprooted the Carmel Priory itself. Meanwhile communities had been founded in Italy, in France, in Scotland, and finally, in 1242, at Aylesford in Kent and in London. The prime mover at both places was Sir Richard de Grey, who brought back a small group of Carmelites to England after the Crusade of 1240-42. It was not long before new communities were set up in a number of other English towns, including Oxford and Cambridge. The Carmelite communities in the west faced inevitable decline unless they could secure and maintain the right, in common with the other mendicant orders, to preach and hear confessions. If they were to preach, they needed also to study; moreover they depended for recruitment on a close attachment to the universities, where both the Franciscans and the Dominicans (who in many ways served them as a model) had by this time established themselves.

The Prior General of the order from 1265 to 1271, Nicholas Gallicus, was a conservative who in a celebrated broadside entitled *Ignea Sagitta* fulminated against the intellectual pretensions of the younger generation of friars, and their life in the towns, which he regarded as sinks of iniquity¹³. He speaks in a tone of regret that is close to poetry of the beauty and calm of the wilderness and the peace of the cell near-celestial¹⁴. But the tide was moving against him. Ralph Fishbourne, Prior Provincial of England from about 1257 to 1271, became Prior General of the order on Nicholas' resignation, and was evidently more go-ahead. His successor Pierre de Millaud (1275-94), who appears to have studied theology at the University of Paris, set up

¹³ Rome, *Archives of the Calced Carmelites Cod.V*, ff. 587-614.

¹⁴ He plays on the words *cella* and *celum*.

a scheme for the organisation of *studia generalia* for the order. By the end of the century there were eight of these, at Paris, Toulouse, Montpellier, Avignon, Bologna, Florence, Cologne and London. Many friars went on to study at universities, and at Cambridge c.1295 Humphrey de Necton became the first Carmelite to achieve a doctorate in an English university¹⁵, thus marking decisively the new orientation of the order.

Two other events at roughly the same time gave a fresh impetus to the Carmelites at Cambridge. The first concerned the whole order: the striped mantle, which was said to represent the burns on Elijah's mantle as he cast it down from the fiery chariot onto Elisha, had come to seem ridiculous, and was replaced in 1287 by the sober white mantle. A year or two later the Cambridge community, which had been established first of all in Chesterton and later in more ample but isolated buildings in Newnham, further south, moved to a central site in the town of Cambridge, close to the heart of the University¹⁶. The brothers had deserted their cells for the hall, the dormitory and the market-place¹⁷, but they never forgot the desert origins of their order.

The White Friars made common cause again and again with the other mendicants, who at the same time tended to resent them as competitors. They could not boast a saintly founder to rival Francis, Dominic or Augustine; they concentrated instead on the traditional role of Elijah, Elisha, and of Mary the Mother of God. The constitution of the order, as adopted in 1281 and revised in 1294 and 1324, contains the following passage¹⁸:

¹⁵ The title used at the time was 'Master of Theology'.

¹⁶ *Liber Memorandum Ecclesie de Bernewelle* ed. J.W.Clark (Cambridge 1907) pp. 211-12; this account makes it clear that there were individual cells at Chesterton and both cells and a dormitory at Newnham.

¹⁷ W.G. Searle, *The History of the Queens' College of St Margaret and St Bernard in the University of Cambridge 1446-1850* (Cambridge 1867). On the new Cambridge site: Queens' Coll. MS Misc.B.f.39 (1540-41) mentions hall, dormitory and cloister as well as church, chapter house with bell-tower, and kitchen: p. 231

¹⁸ Quoted by E. Friedman, *The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel: a study in Carmelite Origins* (Rome 1979) p. 200.

Certain brothers, new to the Order, do not know how to reply... to those who ask from whom or how our Order took its origin. We wish to indicate to them how to reply, in these terms. We therefore affirm, to witness the truth, that beginning with the prophets Elijah and Elisha, pious dwellers on Mount Carmel, the holy fathers of both Old and New Testaments, deeply in love with the solitude of the mountain, unquestionably lived there, in a manner deserving praise, near the Spring of Elijah, in holy penitence, and continued uninterruptedly in holy succession.

The early fourteenth century was a time when the mendicant orders began to stress their intellectual achievements and aspirations in the works of art they commissioned. A recent article in the *Revue de l'Art*, for instance, records the successive decorations of the Chapter House of the Priory at Treviso in northern Italy¹⁹. About the middle of the thirteenth century a Crucifixion was painted in fresco on the eastern wall; and around 1330 the figures of St Dominic, St Peter Martyr and the recently canonised Thomas Aquinas were added, together with those of two Dominican popes and a cardinal. Finally in 1352 a series of no less than 40 Dominican popes, cardinals, saints and beatified friars were painted on the side walls sitting at their desks in a variety of attitudes, with the instruments of writing, and with great tomes about them, some of them wearing spectacles (Fig. 19). Beside them are inscriptions giving their names and achievements. The frescoes as a whole present a community of scholars, of individuals cooperating separately in a joint campaign of study, and study as a mainstay of the faith.

Not many years earlier a Carmelite Priory further south had commissioned a work of art with a very different orientation. Professor Creighton Gilbert has thrown a flood of light on Lorenzetti's reconstructed altarpiece from the Carmelite Priory at Siena (1329)²⁰. He shows that the emphasis on Elijah and Mary

¹⁹ Daniel Russo, 'Compilation iconographique et légitimation de l'ordre dominicain: les fresques de Tomaso da Modena à San Niccolo de Treviso (1352)', *Revue de l'Art* No. 97 (1992) pp. 76-84; Robert Gibbs, *Tomaso da Modena* (Cambridge 1989), pp. 63-87.

²⁰ Creighton Gilbert, 'Some special images for Carmelites, circa 1330-1430', from T. Verdon and J. Henderson (eds), *Christianity and the Renais-*

the Mother of God had as its corollary the anonymity of the Carmelite community in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the studied self-effacement of the key figures in its history, such as the shadowy Brocard, or the spokesmen who received recognition for their order from successive Popes; in Lorenzetti's panels these men are always accompanied by an anonymous group of friars, and are either indistinguishable from their colleagues or are half blotted out by intervening columns (Fig. 20). With the approach of the Renaissance in early fifteenth-century Italy, individual Carmelites more often stood out from the group, and the coming of St Theresa of Avila and St John of the Cross in the following century served to break down anonymity again and again; but it is still a firm tenet of Carmelite communities everywhere.

The fourteenth century was indeed the golden age of the Carmelite Priory in Cambridge. At this time there were hundreds of poor students, many of them little more than boys, who had to beg or steal to keep alive. The Carmelites helped them to stave off starvation, as the Franciscans and Dominicans had been doing for half a century or more, and many, from gratitude if not purely from vocation, followed in their footsteps. Other Carmelite houses sent their young men to study for degrees, and benefactions from the wealthy and powerful made the Priory the envy of the town.

In the later part of the fourteenth century there were two important controversies which need to be recorded. About 1374 a Dominican friar, Dr Stokes, wrote a virulent pamphlet against the Carmelites, deriding their claim to call themselves 'Friars of the Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel'; but a regent master called John Hornby, at a court held in the University Church of St Mary's²¹, made a vigorous defence of his order, and secured a declaration from John of Dunwich, the Chancellor of the University, dated February 23rd 1374/5, that he had proved his case by the citation of accredited documents, and established the Carmelite claim²². This was one of the first to be recorded of

sance: *Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento* (Syracuse N.Y. 1990) pp. 161-207.

²¹ On the site of Great St Mary's, now largely a late 15th and early 16th century building, there has been a church from at least the 13th century onwards.

²² Cambridge University Library MS Ff.6.11, ff.49-55; Oxford Bod.Lib.

many such controversies in western Europe during the following centuries²³. John of Dunwich did not merely declare that the Carmelites were 'imitators and successors' of Elijah and Mary the Mother of God, but formally forbade any repetition of the bitter attacks to which they had been subjected in the University.

The second clash occurred during the last decade of the century, when there were complaints that Carmelites were securing the doctor's degree in theology too easily, largely through the recognition by the University of their more elementary studies within the Priory itself²⁴. Strict rules were accordingly laid down by Cardinal Landulph, the Protector of the Order, and confirmed by Boniface IX in 1397. These stipulated that the degree could only be won after following a succession of studies for not less than 18 years²⁵, though the rules seem to have been relaxed somewhat by the middle of the fifteenth century. The complaint smacks of envy no less than of righteous indignation.

Estimates of academic achievement by the four orders of mendicants in Cambridge tend to be disparate and fragmentary. Thomas Fuller in mid-seventeenth century²⁶, summing up Leland²⁷, Bale²⁸, and Pits²⁹, lists, down to 1500, 37 Carmelites, nine or ten Austins, seven Dominicans, and four Franciscans as

MS e Musaeo 86 ff.176 sqq.

²³ J.P.H. Clark, 'A defence of the Carmelite Order by John Hornby, O.Carm., A.D.1374', *Carmelus* XXXII, 1 (1985, pp. 75-6) suggests that a *Defensorium* or *Dialogus* of John of Hildesheim (d.1375) preceded Hornby's by a year or two.

²⁴ Victoria County History, Cambridgeshire II p. 284.

²⁵ Studies in Arts for seven years (which the mendicants often tried to avoid), and in Theology for seven years; lecturing on the *Sentences* in a university for one year and for two years as *lector principalis*, then for one year more on the Bible.

²⁶ Thomas Fuller, *The History of the University of Cambridge*, ed. M. Prickett and T. Wright (Cambridge and London 1840) pp.68-9.

²⁷ John Leland, *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis* (Oxford 1709).

²⁸ John Bale (1495-1563) published *Illustrium majoris Britanniae scriptorum* at Ipswich in 1548, and a revised and enlarged version *Scriptorum illustrium majoris Britanniae catalogus* at Basle in 1557-9. These are summarised (and referenced) in his notes published by R.Lane Poole (Oxford 1902) as *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*.

²⁹ *Ioannis Pitsei relationum historicarum de rebus Anglicis*. Only one vol. was published, *De illustribus Angliae Scriptoribus*, and that after his death, in Paris 1619.

'learned writers'. Most of the names, however, are contributed by John Bale, who until about 1530 was a Carmelite, though he later became a bitter critic of Catholicism. There appears to be only one extant medieval list, and that tells a surprisingly different story³⁰.

It covers the period between the second quarter of the thirteenth century and the middle of the fourteenth, and gives 73 names of Franciscan Masters of Theology (D.Ds), of whom about 30 seem previously to have studied elsewhere. Records of Austin Friars who were notable for learning are unfortunately scanty and often unspecific. Finally a Dominican, Fr Walter Gumbley, writing in 1938, names 28 Black Friars who secured doctorates at Cambridge before 1500, while noting a gap in the available records during the second quarter of the fifteenth century³¹.

Emden in 1963 was able to use a wide range of sources in compiling his *Biographical Dictionary*. An analysis of his evidence might appear to confirm the White Friars' academic dominance in the later period, though an imbalance in the sources may still be affecting the results. Friars credited by Emden with a doctorate only *probably* or *possibly* from Cambridge are not included. If we start in 1290, just before the White Friars moved from the left to the right bank of the Cam, set a dividing line at 1355, where the medieval list of Franciscan doctors breaks off, and finish at 1500, roughly the latest possible date for the roundels, the result is approximately as follows:

	1290-1355	1355-1500	Total
Franciscans	43	21	64
Dominicans	13	22	35
Austin Friars	4	28	32
Carmelites	9	48	57

³⁰ Thomas Eccleston, *Tractatus de Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, ed. A.G.Little (Manchester 1951) pp. 58-61. The list runs from the second quarter of the thirteenth to the middle of the fourteenth centuries. A. B. Emden *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge 1963) fails to include as doctors at least ten who are so specified in the list.

³¹ *The Cambridge Dominicans* (Oxford 1938) p. 27.

If these figures are anything like a true guide, the Dominicans' envy of the Carmelites had some justification.

A few outstanding White Friars may be mentioned. A dominant figure in the first half of the fourteenth century was John Baconthorpe, who trained primarily at Oxford and in Paris, but also lectured for a time in Cambridge. He was 'small in stature but formidable in intellect and learning': a notable exponent of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Robert Ivorie was Prior of the Cambridge convent from 1372 to 1375, and Prior Provincial from 1379 until his death; he preached before the king on Easter Day 1390³². In 1382 two celebrated Carmelites were prominent in the arraignment of John Wyclif as the instigator of the Peasants' Revolt³³: Stephen Patrington, an Oxford doctor of theology who was afterwards Bishop of St David's, and Walter Diss, a Cambridge doctor who was confessor to John of Gaunt and later became Papal Legate and Prior Provincial of Spain; he died in 1404. In the fifteenth century three outstanding Cambridge Carmelites were Nicholas Cantilupe, Prior successively at Cambridge, Bristol, Gloucester and Nottingham (d.1441), and two men each of whom, apparently, in the absence of the Chancellor of the time, acted in his place: Nicholas Swaffham (d.1449) and Nicholas Kenton (d.1468)³⁴. The list could readily be extended, and carried on well into the sixteenth century, after the date of these roundels.

It was not long, however, before disaster struck. On 20th April 1513 a fire which broke out in buildings to the east appears to have spread to the convent, and wrought considerable havoc, so much so that rebuilding was still under way when in 1536 the general dissolution of the monasteries began³⁵. On 8th August 1538 the king suppressed all the mendicant priories. The few friars who remained had already abandoned hope; on 12th February 1537 they had sold the party wall on the south side of their grounds to Queens' College, which a few days later began to open up windows in its northern walls³⁶. On 8th

³² Emden (1963) p. 669.

³³ H.B.Workman. *John Wyclif* (Oxford 1926) II pp. 245-8 and 261.

³⁴ Emden (1963) s.vv.

³⁵ Zimmerman (1932) p. 97 gives no reference for the fire, but see Searle (186?) p.156 and n. 9 above.

³⁶ For the details of the dissolution see Searle pp. 228-31.

August of the next year, the very day of the king's decree, the Carmelites surrendered their property to the President and Fellows. On the 17th, however, the king laid hands on the Priory himself. The Bursar of Queens' nevertheless proceeded at the end of the next month to pay two workmen 8 d. for dismantling some glass windows, and again in January 1539 disbursed 4 s. for similar work, as well as for removing ironwork and handing other objects over to the treasurer. In September 1540 a new lock and key were bought for the Carmelites' vestry, where materials taken from the courtyard were stored. On 5th October two men were paid for bringing dismantled glass and iron into the College from the Priory.

A further entry in the College accounts, dating from the first days of January 1540/1, requires more detailed examination. This records the payment of 30 s. (a relatively large sum) by two men named Meeres and 'Nox' for 'iron and glass from the buildings, apart from the great east window'³⁷. This might suggest that the glass kept back comprised the ten lights now in the Old Library, which indeed might possibly have stood above and below the transom of a five-light window; but a group of friars' heads in paint and stain could scarcely be considered an appropriate background to a high altar. We know that the Franciscans, who had started during the first half of the thirteenth century in a shed beside the town jail, had a century later filled the windows of their church with glass of outstanding brilliance and quality; this is evident from the ten lights in Sidney Sussex College, eight in the Old Library and two each on the staircase leading to it and in the Ante-Chapel, which are filled with glass dug up on the site of the church. There is not only plain glass painted and stained, but rich potmetal, blue, green, amber, and flashed ruby. There are fragments of hands, and faces in pale murrey glass, together with remains of leaf-quarries, larger than normal. A small part of the glass is in fifteenth-century style³⁸. The scanty remnants of glass from the Augustinian Hermitage on the Downing site, which are now in King's College Chapel, are even more varied, and include sixteenth-century

³⁷ Queens' Coll. Misc.B f.39).

³⁸ The fragments were arranged in appropriate (and elegant) patterns by Dennis King of Norwich.

fragments³⁹. It seems therefore unlikely that the White Friars would have failed to enrich the east window of their church in similar fashion, perhaps, as in the altarpiece at Siena, with figures of the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, and of Elijah. In the sixteenth century, cloisters were glazed with figurative glass by the Cistercians at Mariawald in the Eifel and at Rathausen near Lucerne, and by the Carthusians at Cologne and at Louvain⁴⁰. There is every reason why the Carmelite cloister in Cambridge, at the end of the fifteenth century, should have been glazed, in rather more restrained fashion, with roundels calculated to inspire the young friars who studied there.

Although the Bursar of Queens' had already taken over a large quantity of building materials, it was not until 28th November 1541 that the king's officers of the revenue in the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon sold to Dr May, President of the College, 'all the stone, slate, tiles, timber, iron and glass of the late house of the Carmelites', for £20. The glass must have included the roundels, quarries and borders that are now in the north windows of the Old Library. The king had meanwhile given the site itself to John Eyre of Bury, who sold it to Queens' College on 30th November 1544. The northern part, including the friars' garden, was finally purchased by King's College from Queens' in 1551.

One essential question remains. Who do the roundels represent?

For Fr Zimmerman the identification of the persons represented is all important. 'Ces vitraux, assez laids et sans aucune valeur artistique, sont cependant intéressants, et le seraient davantage, s'il était possible d'identifier les personnages'⁴¹.

At the foot of six of the ten lights concerned there are, in the border, fragments of inscriptions, some of them inside out or upside down, or both, and many of them obscured by thick modern leading. These are likely, though by no means certain, to have come from the same source as the roundels. Only three are sufficiently decipherable to be significant:

³⁹ Window 35 d 5: H.G. Wayment, *King's College Chapel, Cambridge: the Side Chapel Glass* (Cambridge 1988) p.135.

⁴³ *Ibid.* pp. 37-44, 48-52, 55-64, 163-4.

⁴¹ Zimmerman *loc. cit.* in n. 8.

light 6 (upside down) /a(n)imab(us)/ /ni/ce Gay/ (Fig.21)

light 9 (uncial) /nefactor. 1/

light 10 /mag(ist)ri Tho/me Wett/ (or possibly Wett(on))⁴²:
then sideways in smaller letters of a different style /o nich/ (Fig. 22)

The first must come from a memorial inscription asking prayers for the souls of a husband and wife named Gay (or Say)⁴³; it cannot refer directly to any of the friars depicted in the roundels. The second, being in the nominative (and followed by a stop) might possibly refer to a benefactor who was also a friar, but is far more likely to have recorded the gift of a generous layman. This fragment, though no doubt contemporary, may derive from some part of the priory distinct from the source of the roundels, whatever that may have been. The third is more enigmatic. The word *magister* in this context must surely indicate a Master of Theology or D.D. A regent doctor whose surname was Wett figures in the University's records for 1483-4, without any Christian name or any reference to college or convent⁴⁴. The inscription might possibly indicate that one of the roundels (or a similar roundel now lost) represented Dr Wett; or it might simply have been his gift.

McCaffrey discusses the roundels and their inscriptions in two quite separate paragraphs⁴⁵. In one place he speaks of 'cameo portraits of eminent Carmelites, each wearing a Doctor's cap. There were evidently subscriptions giving the names and titles, but unfortunately these have been dispersed or lost. A singular lack of care is displayed in their arrangement in their present positions. Thus we traced two strips of worded glass, set in two different windows, which, placed together, gave a complete name. Because of this carelessness we, unfortunately, have no means of knowing who are represented in these interesting relics'.

⁴² The flourish at the end of the word 'Wett' looks more like a space-filler than a contraction sign.

⁴³ Both names are found e.g. in Emden (1963). A Nicholas Gay entered Peterhouse in 1437, became Bursar, and died in 1474; a John Say came up from Eton to King's in 1486.

⁴⁴ Grace-Book A, 187

⁴⁵ P.R. McCaffrey, *The White Friars* (Dublin 1926). Pp.197 (the page quoted) and 329.

This stricture at least gives a clue as to the date of the last re-reading. It seems likely that the two pieces of glass composing the name and title of Thomas Wett (or Wetton) were at the time of McCaffrey's visit (1926 or before) in two different windows, but were later brought together and set in their present positions.

The roundels might indeed be expected, at first sight, to commemorate specific Carmelite worthies, such as those mentioned earlier. However, there is no clear evidence to support this view. The lights, apart from the introduction of fragments to complete them at head and foot, and the insertion of a case-ment filled with alien but contemporary quarries in light 8, seem likely to be generally in their original order; the close fitting of the quarries round the medallions seems to exclude the possibility that there were names inscribed immediately beneath them.

It would in fact be entirely in accordance with the Carmelite tradition if the friars shown were intended to form an anonymous group such as those in Pietro Lorenzetti's altarpiece (Fig. 20), or for that matter the choir of four Carmelite friars (as they must surely be) in the illumination representing the celebration of Holy Saturday in the English Carmelite Missal of the late fourteenth century which was expertly reconstructed by Margaret Rickert (Fig. 23)⁴⁶. These four singers have a certain variety of movement and expression, but are still of course totally anonymous.

By the second half of the fifteenth century, however, such blank impersonality was already breaking down, particularly in the case of authors. There are, for instance, in Cambridge libraries no less than three manuscript copies of the Carmelite Thomas Walden's *Doctrinale*. Two of these contain illuminated initials which show him kneeling in the conventional position, in one case to the Virgin and Child⁴⁷, and in another to present his book to a Pope⁴⁸. These figures, of course, are on a very small scale, and are far from being portraits.

⁴⁶ London B.L. MS Add. 29704, f.6v: Rickert (1952) Plate I.

⁴⁷ Corpus Christi College Library MS no. 90 (fifteenth century).

⁴⁸ Trinity Hall Library MS no. 3 (Gent 1500). The third is in the University Library, Dd.8.16,17 (from Archbishop Parker).

The friars' heads in these roundels are by no means lacking in animation and individuality, although, as we have seen, at least two, and possibly as many as four, are painted from the same design. They are certainly lively enough to stimulate the young to emulation of the Carmelite worthies of the past, the exemplars with some of whom we have become acquainted in the course of this discussion. Isolated as they are in their medallions, though linked in their identity of function, they are delicately poised between the quiet anonymity of the Carmelite tradition and the warm individualism of the approaching Renaissance.

When this article was ready to go to print Mrs Kerry Ayre and Mr Andrew Rudebeck kindly brought to my attention two Carmelite roundels hitherto unknown to me. The fragment in Mr Rudebeck's collection (Fig. 24) seems to come from a complete roundel broken away at the foot; but since it includes an inscribed scroll with the words *memento finis* it is unlikely in addition to have included the name of the friar, who is shown writing at his desk in the manner of some of the Dominicans at Treviso. The roundel is no doubt English, as the evident *horror vacui* would suggest. Since the friar is using his left hand the image is probably copied, as often in reverse, from some previous version, perhaps not English. The diameter of the fragment is 18 cm., and its date is probably *c.* 1450.

The roundel in the Purrell Collection, Glasgow, (Fig. 25) is more closely comparable with the Queens' College set, though it has been badly damaged and only the main piece to the left side is original. A friar in a doctor's cap, with an almost boy-like face, is shown in head-and-shoulders raising both hands in front of him as in prayer. The vacuum behind him, in true English fashion, is filled by a diamond-shaped diaper, and there is no border. Probably from a workshop in the Midlands, second quarter C15. The diameter is 20.6 cm. Inv. no. 45.105: formerly Eumorfopoulos Collection.

The survival in three separate instances of C15 Carmelite figures, all clearly encouraging devout study, suggests that in the century before the Reformation, at least, the English White Friars, in following the example already set by the Dominicans, were commonly using the roundel form, but probably without naming their exemplars.

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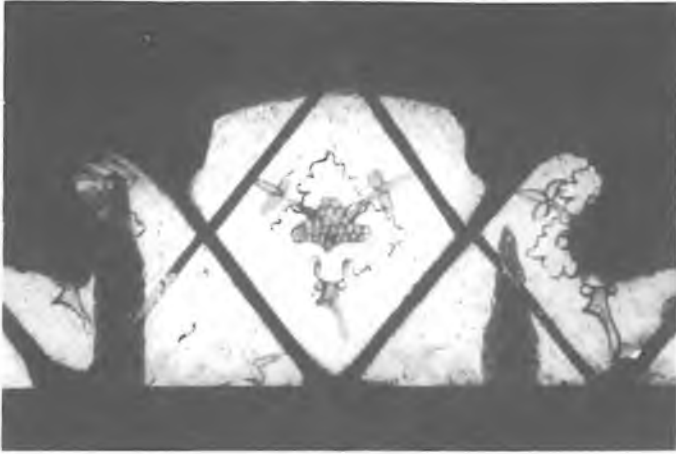




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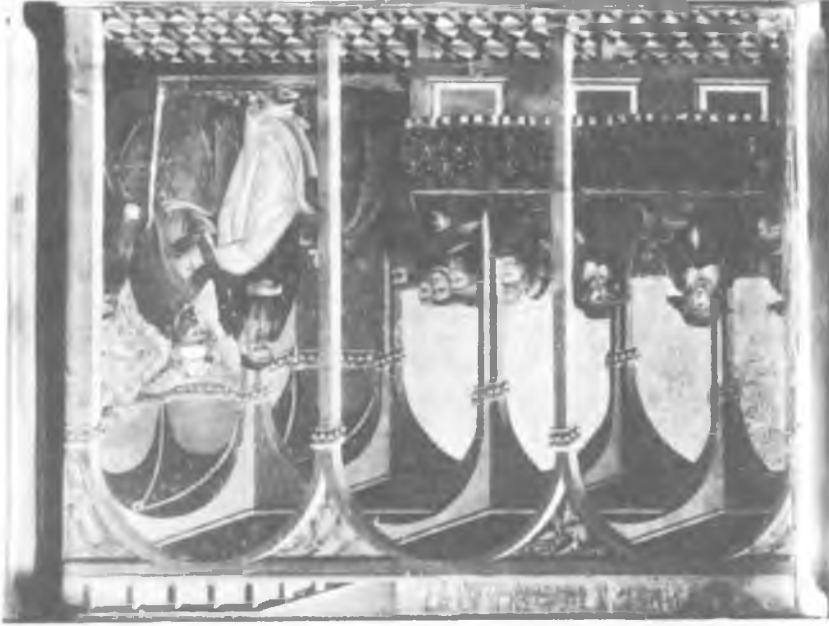




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