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Luxford, Julian

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Recording and curating Relics at Westminster Abbey in the late Middle Ages

Abstract

Westminster Abbey's relics, and objects functionally related to them, were kept in the shrine chapel of St Edward the Confessor, where the kings and queens of England were customarily buried. They constituted a discrete collection, curated by a dedicated monastic officer titled 'the keeper of St Edward's shrine and the relics of St Peter's church'. Inventories of the chapel, made when the office changed hands, survive from 1467, 1479 and 1520. These documents are analysed here for what they reveal of the contents of the collection, monastic interest in it, and the way the relics and related objects were cared for. As an important aspect of the chapel's spatial configuration, the problem of where precisely the relics were located, is also investigated. By examining the routine management of a single, important collection, the article aims to contribute to a more holistic understanding of the cult of relics in the late Middle Ages.

Introduction: Westminster's relic-inventories and their value

This article uses three late medieval shrine-keepers' inventories from Westminster Abbey to examine the collection of relics and related objects kept in the chapel of St Edward the Confessor. The contents of this collection were important to the monastery and its patrons in many ways, but with the exception of the shrine itself, and the relic of the Holy Blood, they have attracted little attention in published scholarship.¹ Yet the subject is accessible, for the surviving inventories, coupled with other sources, provide a complex and evocative picture of what they record. Importantly for the theme of this volume, they are clearer than other

¹ On St Edward's cult, see Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power 1200-1400* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), 52-89.

For the Holy Blood relic, see Nicholas Vincent, *The Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

sources about both the appearance of the collection and the spatial relationship of the relics to the fixed monuments and furnishings of the chapel. These documents also throw light on the serious, unglamorous business of curating precious, portable objects, a complex process always latent in the history of medieval liturgy and devotion but usually obscure due to lack of evidence.² The broad purpose of the article is to contribute to knowledge of the cult of relics at Westminster with particular reference to these themes.

The size and value of the abbey's relic-collection, its reputation and the extent of its significance, all make this an inviting focus. At Westminster, relics were used formally and informally, in contexts ranging from the coronation of kings and queens to the personal devotion of individual monks. They embodied the unique conflation of spiritual and historical associations that generated the monastery's prestige, a point emphasised by the chronicles kept with them. On the whole, Westminster is less quickly associated with its relics than other great Benedictine houses, in particular Christ Church Canterbury, Durham and Glastonbury. Scholarship tends to regard its major saint, Edward the Confessor, as of greater political than popular significance, and its status as a seat of royal power has inevitably deflected attention from its spiritual economy. However, late medieval reports pay close attention to the abbey's relics. One visitor who came to the abbey in 1477, the Bohemian Leo of Rozmítal, was moved by their number, recollecting that 'when I tried to write a list and make notes of them, I was told that I could not possibly write them all down, for there were

² Evidence is not wholly lacking: the fifteenth-century shine keepers' customary from Canterbury cathedral (British Library, Add. MS 59616, fols 1-11) contains some detailed information about security measures, as discussed by Peter Draper, 'Enclosures and Entrances in Medieval Cathedrals: Access and Security', in *The Medieval English Cathedral*, ed. Janet Backhouse (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2003), 76-88.

so many that two scribes could not list them in a fortnight'.³ Even if there is some exaggeration in this, it is relevant to the business of this article that an experienced traveller – not motivated by patriotism – encapsulated the abbey's magnificence by its relics at the same time that the inventories analysed here were made.

These inventories are dated 1467, 1479 and 1520 respectively (Figure 1).⁴ Only the most recent of them has previously been printed, by H. F. Westlake in 1923.⁵ In past work, this has been overlooked in favour of the relic-list which John Flete, a senior monk, included in a treatise about the abbey's history compiled in the mid-fifteenth century.⁶ Drawing on an older

³ Malcolm Letts, trans. and ed., *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Portugal and Italy, 1465-1467* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 53. See also Charlotte A. Sneyd, ed., *A Relation, or Rather a True Account of the Island of England [...] about the Year 1500* (London: Camden Society, 1847), 30; Cameron Louis, ed., *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes of Acle: an Edition of Tanner MS 407* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1980), 237-8.

⁴ Westminster Abbey Muniments 9477, 9478, 9485. There is no English parallel for the survival of such documents. The only other indented relic-list from a religious context I know is from Lichfield cathedral, dated 1345 (Lichfield Record Office, D30/7/1/1).

⁵ Herbert F. Westlake, *Westminster Abbey: the Church, Convent, Cathedral and College of St. Peter, Westminster* (London: P. Allan & Co., 1923), 2: 499–501, 504-5. Jocelyn Perkins, *Westminster Abbey: its Worship and Ornaments* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938-52), 3: 203-4, also printed the first section of the 1520 inventory.

⁶ John Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey by John Flete*, ed. Joseph A. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 68-73, printed from Westminster Abbey Library MS 29, fols 18-20. A copy dated 1450 is British Library, Cotton MS Claudius A

list, probably written in the mid-fourteenth century, Flete classified relics by their origin and patronage, presenting those of Christ, the Virgin Mary, apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins in separate groups, which he then subdivided according to the identity and status of donors. By contrast, the inventories give a candid picture of attitudes to relics at Westminster. Where Flete included only what he could attribute to the generosity of princes of Church and State, the shrine-keepers acknowledged the gifts of fellow monks. While the miscellany's list suggests an uncompromised collection organised by saintly rank, the inventories record dilapidation, alienation and theft, accidental loss and piecemeal additions. Without a doubt, Flete better reflects the importance of relics to the public reputation of Westminster Abbey, but these utilitarian documents suggest the place of relics in the local monastic economy in a way that he does not. Historians have generally ignored the local, 'domestic' functions of relics, although Eric Inglis has recently approached it through the surviving inventories of St-Denis, another Benedictine house exalted by antique dignity and royal ceremony.⁷ Inglis reasonably views the attitudes revealed by the French documents as evidence of monastic imagination, particularly regarding sacred art. Westminster's inventories are not so rich or populous – in some respects they are downright bald – but assumptions about monastic attitudes to relics and the special things kept with them are also visible in what and how they record.

The inventories contribute fundamentally to knowledge of sacred space at Westminster by confirming the traditional view that St Edward's chapel was the main location of relics in the

VIII, fols 36v-39. Flete's list is discussed in some detail in Islwyn G. Thomas, 'The Cult of Saints' Relics in Medieval England' (PhD diss., University of London, 1974), 295-312.

⁷ Eric Inglis, 'Expertise, Artifacts, and Time in the 1534 Inventory of the St-Denis Treasury', *The Art Bulletin* 98 (2016): 14-42.

late Middle Ages. This point requires some emphasis, because it has recently been denied in a way that distorts recognition of the physical and symbolic centrality of relics to the monks and their patrons. Instead, the sacristy has been proposed as the normal repository of Westminster's relics, simply because the sacrist and his deputies are assigned responsibility for relics in the abbey's customary.⁸ A range of evidence shows that this idea is mistaken. The shrine-keeper, who is styled 'the keeper of St Edward's shrine and the relics of St Peter's church' in the inventories, was certainly a deputy of the sacrist, as thus answerable to him, but all of the relevant documentation shows that his domain was (as one would expect) the chapel that housed the shrine.⁹ The customary, which survives in a fifteenth-century copy, contains nothing to contradict this.¹⁰ Henry V's will, made in 1415, assumes that the relics were kept at the chapel's eastern altar, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and a royal letter of 1438 describes the chapel as the long-time location of the relics.¹¹ Transcripts of lay and

⁸ Leslie Milner, 'St Faith's Chapel at Westminster Abbey: the Significance of its Design, Decoration and Location', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 169 (2016): 80, 92-3 notes 35, 36.

⁹ For the relationship of sacrist to shrine-keeper, see Barbara Harvey, *The Obedientiaries of Westminster Abbey and their Financial Records, c.1275-1540* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), xix, 169. The shrine also had an under-keeper: see e.g. Arthur P. Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey* (London: John Murray, 1868), 514.

¹⁰ For the relevant passages, see Edward M. Thompson, ed., *Customary of the Benedictine Monasteries of Saint Augustine, Canterbury, and Saint Peter, Westminster* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1902-4), 2: 53, 62, 77-8.

¹¹ John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, trans. and ed., *The St Albans Chronicle: Volume II 1394-1422* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 778-9; William H.

monastic depositions about where King Henry VI wanted to be buried, discussed further below, state multiply and explicitly that the relics were kept in the chapel during the 1450s and were still there in 1498 when the testimony was recorded.¹² This location is taken for granted in the inventories, but confirmed by the fact that the shrine-keeper was also responsible for Henry V's chantry chapel and tomb, which stood within St Edward's chapel. Most of the coronation regalia were certainly kept in the treasury, and a handful of relics are documented in other places. An unspecified number were fixed in tables in the Lady chapel in 1304, and a lily-pot with six 'branches' and a constant stream of water coming from it, perhaps a relic of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, was reported to stand on the south side of the high altar c. 1500.¹³ But the number will never have been large in proportion to the whole collection, if only because dispersion made precious objects vulnerable to theft. The inventories reveal how great this risk was. They also demonstrate that important objects like the Ascension stone and the maniple believed to have contained St Paul's decapitated head were kept with the other relics rather than in the special locations that have sometimes been imagined for them.¹⁴ Certain relics, such as the piece of the Holy Cross and leg of St George

St John Hope, 'The Funeral, Monument and Chantry Chapel of King Henry the Fifth', *Archaeologia* 65 (1914): 145-6, 153, 154: 'ubi reliquie [...] antiquitus locabantur'); J. G. O'Neilly and Lawrence E. Tanner, 'The Shrine of St. Edward the Confessor', *Archaeologia* 100 (1966): 131.

¹² Printed in Stanley, *Historical Memorials*, 506-14.

¹³ Westlake, *Westminster Abbey*, 2: 502; Louis, *Commonplace Book*, 237-8. I exclude from consideration the relics buried in altars, which were immovable.

¹⁴ For example, Christopher Wilson and others, *Westminster Abbey* (London: Bell & Hyman, 1986), 103 (maniple located in the chapel of St Paul) (text by Pamela Tudor-Craig); Pamela

bequeathed by Henry VII, were regularly removed for ritual purposes, but their permanent home was under lock and key inside the elevated ring of royal tombs to the east of the high altar.¹⁵ As such, they were spatially and materially associated with the power these tombs expressed. Sainthood, royal and monastic fellowship were visibly coextensive here, and to doubt the relics' concentration around St Edward's shrine is to misunderstand medieval interest in the chapel as a locus of burial, ceremony and authority.

Analysis of the inventories also reveals the monks' attentiveness to the forms and materials of what they record, giving the reader a sense of surface and facture ignored by John Flete in his record of the abbey's relics. This attention emerges in many relic-lists from the fourteenth century onwards, to the extent that it has been taken to typify the financial scruples of a late medieval Church in moral and constitutional decline.¹⁶ But it is really an aspect of bureaucracy rather than avarice, and relates to the purposes of such lists. Many medieval lists refer simply to relics, with little or no mention of the collateral apparatus – reliquaries, furniture, vestments, books and so on – used in relic-presentation. It is reasonable to think that these 'simple' relic-lists, which range from the very short to the long and multifarious (e.g. those from Exeter cathedral, Glastonbury abbey and elsewhere), were primarily used for

Tudor-Craig, 'The 'Large Letters' of the Litlington Missal', in *Illuminating the Book: Makers and Interpreters*, ed. Michelle P. Brown and Scot McKendrick (London: The British Library, 1998), 110-11 (Ascension stone located in a Cosmati-work tomb in the south ambulatory).

¹⁵ Margaret Condon, 'The Last Will of Henry VII: Document and Text', in *Westminster Abbey: the Lady Chapel of Henry VII*, ed. Richard Mortimer and Tim Tatton-Brown (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 132. St George's leg, 'garnysshed with [...] a redde rose & ij portecollizes', is plainly listed in the 1520 inventory.

¹⁶ Thomas, 'Cult of Saints' Relics', 41-6.

ritual or devotional purposes, or else as a form of institutional self-advertisement.¹⁷ They might be read aloud on significant occasions (as at Salisbury cathedral), pasted on boards for public display (as at Glastonbury), or written into gospel-books (as at St Augustine's abbey at Canterbury, Exeter cathedral, Thorney abbey and York Minster): often, the reason for making them is unclear.¹⁸ Their forensic value was evidently low. However, other lists, including the Westminster inventories, were designed specifically as statements of account, against which individuals could make claims or be held responsible. As such, they record the things a viewer could actually see of the relics. Lists of this sort existed in multiple copies: Westminster's were made in triplicate, indented, and written in Middle English, a feature which made them accessible to more readers and thus more functionally versatile. Their practical purpose dictated their content, for the clearest way to identify and monitor the existence of precious objects was to record their manifest appearance or type rather than the fact that they were made of bone or dust or wood. The identifying labels routinely affixed to medieval relics probably played a part when relic-collections like Westminster's were audited – for example, to distinguish one head or arm reliquary from another – but were insufficient

¹⁷ For the Exeter and Glastonbury lists, see respectively Patrick W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: a Tenth-Century Cultural History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), 191-8; James P. Carley and Martin Howley, 'Relics at Glastonbury in the Fourteenth Century: an Annotated Edition of British Library, Cotton Titus D.vii, fols 2r–13v', in *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, ed. James P. Carley (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 569-614.

¹⁸ For discussion of the lists cited here, and the category of document called relic-lists in general, see Julian Luxford, 'The Nature and Purpose of Medieval Relic-Lists', in *Saints and their Cults in the Middle Ages*, ed. Susan Powell (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2017), 58-79.

to describe the appearance or materials of precious containers and accessories which were portable, often small, and could thus be stolen.

This forensic concern with appearances means that the Westminster inventories refer to materials, iconography, colour, number, size, physical condition and alienation. A sort of practical typology arises from the division of altar-gear (textiles, books and plate), which is listed first, relics, which are grouped together in a second section of text, and the portable, precious elements of Henry V's chapel and tomb, presented in a third section. The spiritual imperatives underlying 'simple' relic-lists are evident only in the precedence given to relics of Christ and the Virgin Mary in the second section, and even here, containers, materials and colours are invoked. The relic-lists in each inventory soon devolve to a sequence that looks disordered but is likely to reflect the otherwise invisible arrangement of objects in a lockable safe. This is the only obvious way to explain such apparent disorder in documents carefully compiled by tidy-minded men.

The artefactual value of the inventories

These observations about purpose and layout suggest that the informational value of the Westminster inventories is not simply commensurate with their texts. In fact, their object-status is inseparable from their value as historical evidence. The point here is the basic and important one that, as unique parchment objects inscribed and cut in particular ways, designed for archiving, retrieval, augmentation and collation and thus per se important to their makers, they convey a stronger sense of how the things they record were curated than printed editions of their contents could. The fact that there is a series of them sharpens one's impression of their material significance, because comparison of what they record over the fifty-three years from 1467 to 1520 reveals changes that indicate some of the pressures and

obligations of the shrine-keeper's brief. Losses, through theft or carelessness, had to be owned and excused, donations acknowledged and mistakes in previous lists corrected directly onto the parchment. These things would be visible but less obvious in a printed text. For example, anyone using H. F. Westlake's edition of the 1520 inventory would miss the fact that the shrine-keeper had until recently been responsible for Henry V's tomb and the valuables associated with it.¹⁹ It goes without saying that he or she would also miss the metaphysical value which emerges from what Laura Kendrick has called the 'personal' and 'natural' traces of the individuals and circumstances that produced medieval documents.²⁰ This value, Kendrick thinks, gives the modern observer an access to history which is both powerful and more easily felt than articulated, and no doubt she is correct. The aura of medieval manuscripts, and whatever agency this aura has, arises from 'fuzzy' perceptions of content, historical prestige and the graphicacy of scribes which, in the Westminster inventories no less than the Great Domesday Book or surviving copies of Magna Carta, amounts to the enduring encapsulation of vanished space, concepts and objects by personal handwriting.²¹

All three of the inventories are indented at the top. In those from 1467 and 1479, a word (different in each) has been written above the text and cut through as a formulaic precaution

¹⁹ He or she might also puzzle in vain over 'ye iiij kings of Coleyn' (Westlake, *Westminster Abbey*, 2: 499). In fact, this is an editorial peccadillo: the scribe numbered the usual three.

²⁰ Laura Kendrick, *Animating the Letter: The Figurative Embodiment of Writing from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 11-35.

²¹ For extensive, current discussions of graphicacy, see *Graphic Devices and the Early Decorated Book*, ed. Michelle P. Brown, Ildar H. Garipzanov and Benjamin C. Tilghman (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017).

against forgery, although it is hard to believe that forgery was a genuine concern here, and the 1520 document lacks this feature. There are no seals, notarial marks or witnessing signatures. The only evidence of agreement about the chapel's contents is conveyed by a standard formula at the beginning, according to which the outgoing shrine-keeper 'delivers' the contents of the collection to his successor. Thus, on 21 December 1467, Thomas Arundel delivers the relics, their appurtenances and chantry gear to his successor Richard Teddington, on 9 October 1479 Teddington hands over to John Waterden, on 10 November 1520 William Green cedes his office to Henry Winchester.²² In each case the document verifies the transaction by 'witnessing' it ('This endentur tripartite [...] witnessith þat' etc.).

While these are apparently the dates when the documents were written out and separated from their counterparts, the detailed process of auditing the chapel's contents was presumably done earlier. Various clues about this process are available. For example, the order of listing in the inventories is sufficiently similar to show that the text of one was based closely upon that of its most recent predecessor. However, it is also clear that no surviving document was simply copied from another. Not only does the 1479 inventory incorporate various changes, but also many of its words are differently spelled, suggesting that its scribe used another dialect of Middle English. The extent and flavour of this are easily conveyed by juxtaposing examples of spellings in the three sections of the 1467 inventory with their 1479 equivalents: 'aubys'/'awbis' [albs], 'byrddys'/'briddes' [birds], 'casys'/'caaces' [cases], 'cofur'/'coffre', 'cusshynnys'/'quyssshons' [cushions], 'juelle'/'jewell', 'kuuere'/'covir', 'nisoklys'/'honysoles', 'Relyquys'/'Relikes', 'third'/'thrid', 'walanice'/'valance',

²² For biographical information about these monks, see Ernest H. Pearce, *The Monks of Westminster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 143-4 (Teddington), 147-8 (Arundel), 158 (Waterden), 172-3 (Green), 182 (Winchester).

‘wynys’/‘vynes’ and so on. This shows that an auditor read aloud from an existing list to a scribe who wrote down what he heard. Either the auditor changed the inflections of the words as he read them, and the scribe committed the speech sounds he heard to his copy, or else the scribe himself translated what he heard into his own dialect. Whichever happened, the scribe cannot simply have copied the text of the earlier document out, inserting only necessary amendments about changes to the collection’s contents, because if he had done so then he would not have altered the spelling so thoroughly. An aspect of the auditing process is fossilised, as it were, in the surviving documents. With this said, it is worth noting that the inventories represent the end-point of the process. The scribes involved in the audits must have made working copies of the inventories, which were subsequently written up as fair copies in triplicate for distribution (probably to the abbot, prior and sacrist). Whatever the finer points of procedure, it is hard to account for both the similarities and the differences between the inventories’ content and orthography in another way.

It is difficult to know what part, if any, the surviving documents played in regular audits of the chapel’s contents. These inventories are final accounts: running accounts, based on annual audits, were probably kept in another form.²³ It is hard to think that such a valuable collection was only audited when one shrine-keeper surrendered his office to another. At Lichfield cathedral, which also had an extensive and prestigious relic-collection, annual audits are recorded in the fifteenth century.²⁴ That the surviving inventories did not simply disappear into the abbey’s archives after the appointment of a new shrine-keeper is suggested by post

²³ Compare Harvey, *Obedientiaries*, xl-xli.

²⁴ Robert N. Swanson, ‘Extracts from a Fifteenth-Century Lichfield Cathedral Chapter Act Book’, in *A Medieval Miscellany, Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, 4th series, 20 (2004): 158.

factum changes to those of 1467 and 1479. In the first section of the 1467 document, a record about three albs has been bracketed and ‘vacat’ written by it to indicate these vestments’ removal. A staring eye was also drawn to catch the reader’s attention, and possibly also to indicate that the albs had been sent to the abbey’s chapel of the chapel of St Edward at Islip, near Oxford: the fact that Abbot John Islip (1500-32) was later to use a staring eye as part of his rebus suggests this.²⁵ The albs were duly omitted from the 1479 inventory, which has its own intervention in the form of a note added in a different hand and ink. This states that a monk named John Hilston had given a garment to costume a special image of Christ kept with the relics.²⁶

The contents and connotations of the collection

The text of the 1479 inventory, which adds and subtracts certain objects listed in 1467 in revealing ways, is printed in an appendix to this article. As noted, the 1520 inventory is already in print, and its distance from its counterparts is shown by the absence of Henry V’s tomb and chapel gear. In other respects, its text is close enough to the earlier documents to show close reliance on an antecedent inventory. The orthography of the 1520 inventory is

²⁵ In other manuscript contexts, eyes were drawn to admonish viewers: Nicholas J. Rogers, ‘Dieu y voye: Some Late Medieval and Early Modern Instances of Divine Seeing’, in *Signs and Symbols*, ed. John Cherry and Ann Payne (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2009), 64-72.

However, this was not the purpose of the eye added to the Westminster document. For Abbot Islip’s rebus, see M. T. Payne, ‘The Islip Roll Re-examined’, *Antiquaries Journal* 97 (2017): 233-5.

²⁶ For Hilston, see Pearce, *Monks of Westminster*, 158.

different again from those of 1467 and 1479, but in this case there is no immediate predecessor to compare it against, which weakens (without dispelling) the impression of a text rooted in living, colloquial voices. For these reasons, the 1479 text has been preferred here, and will form the basis of the following account of the chapel's contents. Admittedly, the 1520 text better indicates the waxing as well as the waning of the collection, due to its relatively long list of addenda. It is particularly suggestive of the idea that – to paraphrase Inglis – one could never step into the same collection of monastic treasures twice.²⁷ However, it is easy enough to account for these items in the course of the discussion, and it makes basic sense to work forwards rather than backwards in time.

As noted above, the 1467 and 1479 inventories are set out in three distinct sections (Figure 1). The first block of text lists objects devoted to the chapel's liturgy, the second records relics, their receptacles and other valuables, while the third contains the equipment for Henry V's chantry and the precious elements of his tomb. This structure reflects conceptual divisions, highlighted by the way the sections are introduced: 'þe vestementis and oþer clothes', 'the Relikes' and the 'auter of kyng herry the vth'. In practical terms, this also represents a way of dividing the material up for the purposes of audit, and corresponds to the fact that the things in the shrine-keeper's care were stored in a number of separate safes.

While it would be possible to give a rough count of the objects listed in each section, there is no way of knowing if the inventories cover everything kept in the chapel. The second section certainly does not itemise everything. But the first probably does, as it contains structurally simple things which were not made to house others. The exception to this is three 'long' chests for holding the gear for the shrine altar. These come up first, and their inclusion, as opposed to any containing furniture for the relics in section two, shows that they were not too

²⁷ Inglis, 'Expertise, Artifacts, and Time', 15.

heavy to be removed.²⁸ The most numerous objects in the chests were vestments, for the shrine altar, priests, sedilia, images and tombs. First mentioned are Lenten cloths for ‘the’ images of St Edward and St John the Evangelist, evidently the chapel’s principal, sculpted images. Such cloths also appear in an inventory of the vestry made in 1388, where the images are designated ‘ad feretrum’.²⁹ These images appear nowhere else in the inventories, so they were presumably immovable and not made of precious material. Their juxtaposition is evoked by the familiar mid-thirteenth-century drawing in the illustrated *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, which shows sculptures of Edward (offering a ring) and John (garbed as a pilgrim) standing on columns on either side of the shrine (Cambridge, University Library MS Ee.3.59, fol. 30).³⁰ However, their likely location in the fifteenth century is indicated by the monumental niches flanking the sedilia (and facing the shrine-altar) on the central section of the high altar screen (Figure 2). After these cloths comes a ‘cover’ for Edward I’s tomb, perhaps the embroidered cloth of golden silk recorded to have dressed the monument at the coronation of Edward III in 1327.³¹ This cover suggests that the monks thought the baldness of the tomb inappropriate in given contexts, or else that the tomb was sometimes used as a base for displaying precious objects. The fact that there was another cloth by 1520 for Richard II and Anne of Bohemia’s surpassingly sumptuous tomb would not contradict the

²⁸ For medieval long chests still at Westminster, see *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England): London, Vol. 1 (Westminster Abbey)* (London: H.M.S.O., 1924), 14, 45, 51, 75, 81, 82.

²⁹ John W. Legg, ‘On an Inventory of the Vestry in Westminster Abbey, taken in 1388’, *Archaeologia* 52 (1890): 279.

³⁰ Reproduced in Binski, *Westminster Abbey*, 60.

³¹ William R. Lethaby, *Westminster Abbey Re-Examined* (London: Duckworth, 1925), 276.

idea that Edward I's monument was occasionally embarrassing, because this was clearly an anniversary pall. Made of black dyed canvas, with a single, identifying white hart, its visual and material austerity seems calculated to contrast with a monument so beautiful that the dissolution inventory compiled in 1540 calls it a shrine.³²

A large number of carpets and cushions are listed next. The carpets – blue, white and red – are listed as 'tapetes', of which there are twelve, and 'carpetes', of which there are only two.

No functional distinction is likely, and the 1520 inventory omits reference to 'carpets'.

Altogether there were fifteen cushions in 1479, six embroidered with the words 'dona nobis requiem'. Three were in a very poor state: the testimony to their condition was evidently a way of identifying them and indemnifying their custodian against any charge of carelessness.

The other nine were of cloth of gold, one of them 'long' and probably for the bench of the sedilia. Vestments for the shrine altar follow: six pairs of curtains of single colours for

various liturgical occasions, nine altar cloths with integral frontals, five towels (one for 'wyping') and eight corporals in burses. The cloths, frontals and burses were of a range of

colours and materials. Most of them had decorative embroidery, although one cloth with

frontal was white with a red cross for lent, while another, called 'old', is designated

'cotidiane', and thus evidently for ferial use. Being concerned with appearances rather than

financial value, the auditors listed cloth types (baudekin, silk, velvet) only sporadically, but, so far as one can tell, consistently specified colours, designs and other distinguishing features.

Thus, for example, among the cloths and frontals, there was one red with green honeysuckle,

two blue with gold birds and one white with gold branches. One burse had an image of St

Edward on it, and it was sufficient to cite this without and reference to colour. Two other

³² Mackenzie E. C. Walcott, 'The Inventories of Westminster Abbey at the Dissolution',

Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society 4 (1871-4): 352.

burses, both blue, were different in that one displayed the letter 'E' and gold stars while the other had animals and the word 'Odio' on it.³³ A further burse, with its corporal, was 'kept in the vestrye', a specification not found in 1467. In 1520, this item was not listed, and its reassignment, along with the movement into the chapel of the Lenten cloths for the images *ad feretrum* and the transfer of vestments to St Edward's chapel at Islip, evoke the fluidity of objects in common ownership. The differences by 1520 also suggest this fluidity: there were three more cushions, one less cloth and frontal and three fewer burses and corporals. By the final reckoning in 1540, the changes were greater still.³⁴

Of mass vestments for the priests there were five sets, each comprising a chasuble, alb with stole and fanon, and almuce. There were also three albs by themselves, along with an unattached set of apparels, the latter given by a monk named William Wycombe.³⁵ These are the three albs whose extraction from the chapel is indicated by the *vacat* annotation in the 1467 inventory. The 1479 inventory states that they were sent to Islip by Abbot George Norwich (ruled 1463-7) when Richard Teddington was shrine-keeper, along with a chasuble embroidered with the Annunciation. A question about abbatial prerogative arises here which the inventories cannot solve, although the fact that Islip was an abbatial rather than conventual manor makes Norwich's patronage in that direction appropriate. The claim also involves a difficulty of interpretation which is potentially significant for one's view of the auditing process. The fact is that the tenures of Norwich and Teddington did not overlap:

³³ This word was perhaps a cue to recall the promise reported in the synoptic gospels, that the man hated (*odio*) for professing Christ's name would be saved by perseverance: Matthew 10:22; compare Matthew 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17.

³⁴ Walcott, 'Inventories of Westminster', 350-2.

³⁵ For Wycombe, see Pearce, *Monks of Westminster*, 151.

while Teddington formally took responsibility on 21 December 1467, Norwich was demoted for mismanagement a month earlier, on 24 November.³⁶ It is thus hard to understand the claim without invoking a mistake.

The collection also included fourteen books, thirteen of them listed after the vestments. The singleton, a psalter 'of seint Edward', is recorded among the relics. Practically nothing is known about the books kept in medieval shrine-chapels, so the list is of considerable interest for what it reveals of a textual dimension to relic-curation. Ten or eleven were liturgical, including eight used for celebrating mass. As well as two missals, there were six 'bookes for seynt Edwardes masse, on þe Sondays to syng upon'. The number here must correspond to an enlarged weekly liturgy, also reflected by the five sedilia facing the altar (Figure 2).³⁷ 'To sing upon' suggests they were cantors' books. Alternatively, they may have included mass-books not mentioned in the list: a gradual, epistle lectionary and gospel lectionary.³⁸ In 1467 there was a Sarum breviary, but twelve years later this was reported to have been 'lost' by Sir Richard Woodville (d. 1469), the father of the queen. This book was evidently for the use of distinguished lay visitors. There were also two limp-bound quires, or pamphlets, one containing collects and gospel texts 'for our lady girdyll'. The girdle, a major relic of the

³⁶ David M. Smith, ed., *The Heads of Religious Houses: England & Wales, III. 1377-1540* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 79; Pearce, *Monks of Westminster*, 141-2.

³⁷ The central stall is larger, and surely for the abbot. The others were for the celebrant, deacon and sub-deacon, and possibly also a cantor responsible for the musical parts of the mass not sung by the celebrant.

³⁸ These points do not exhaust the possibilities, and the matter will support more attention. For example, a separate missal may have been provided for the abbot when he attended.

abbey, is singled out in the customary and was evidently much loved.³⁹ Perhaps the pamphlet was used on the feast of the Assumption on 15 August, when the Virgin Mary was supposed to have dropped her girdle into the hand of the apostle Thomas. The other pamphlet, simply designated ‘of þe Relikes’, possibly had some special connection with the feast of relics (16 July). However, as no content is specified, it may as well have been a comprehensive, self-contained relic-list of the sort that survives from Durham and Glastonbury.⁴⁰ As such, it would be a likely candidate for Flete’s source for the relics. The other two books were chronicles, a *Flores Historiarum* and a *Polychronicon*. These testified to the antiquity and dignity of Westminster Abbey, St Edward’s patronage of it, and its ownership of certain relics, notably the Holy Blood.⁴¹ As such, their purpose was basically forensic. Flete used both authorities to support various claims about the abbey’s history, and it is reasonable to imagine Arundel, Teddington and Waterden producing these books when people of quality visited the shrine.⁴² The surviving Westminster copy of the *Flores* has Teddington’s name on a flyleaf and so may be the identical manuscript (Manchester, Chetham’s Library MS 6712, fol. 298).⁴³ The chronicles and pamphlets were gone by 1520, when only one missal and the

³⁹ Thompson, *Customary of Westminster*, 2: 49.

⁴⁰ Luxford, ‘Nature and Purpose’, 71.

⁴¹ Henry R. Luard, ed., *Flores Historiarum* (London: H.M.S.O., 1890), 2: 343-4; 3: 241; Churchill Babington and Joseph R. Lumby, eds., *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi Cestrensis* (London: Longman & Co., 1882), 8: 238-9; also Vincent, *Holy Blood*, 2 n. 7.

⁴² Flete, *History of Westminster*, 46 (*Polychronicon*), 100, 101, 103, 108, 119 (*Flores*).

⁴³ See Neil R. Ker and others, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969-2002), 3: 348-50. Matthew Payne and Warwick Rodwell, ‘Edward the Confessor’s Shrine in Westminster Abbey: Its Date of Construction Reconsidered’,

six books for St Edward's mass were listed together. These had, however, been joined by 'a paper masseboke of Salisburys use of William Caxton gyffte' and 'an olde sawterboke of parchement'.⁴⁴

The first section ends with liturgical plate, including a substantial chalice, cruets, an enamelled pax and a wooden staff with silver trimmings to which a reliquary was fitted on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September). Various horns are also listed: fifteen of them in 1467, rising to eighteen in 1479, although one – St Kenelm's horn – is noted as stolen on Teddington's watch. Perhaps these horns were reliquaries, like the great ivory horn suspended above the high altar at Canterbury cathedral.⁴⁵ This would explain their reassignment to the second section in the 1520 inventory. After this come items given by named patrons, whose typology suggests they belong further up the list, but which were evidently added at the end of the section as they were given, and copied in this position with each iteration of the inventory. Thus, there are altar clothes of blue damask provided by 'Lady Hungerford', presumably Margaret Botreux (d. 1478), who gave gifts of the same type,

Antiquaries Journal 97 (2017): 187-204, assume the surviving *Flores* was the shrine copy. A surviving *Polychronicon* attributed to Westminster (John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 98 n. 1) has a passage about Henry III's procession to Westminster with the Holy Blood, but nothing obvious to link it to the shrine: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 341, fol. 133.

⁴⁴ Westlake, *Westminster Abbey*, 2: 505; Perkins, *Westminster Abbey*, 3: 204. In 1540, there were still two missals, one of Sarum use and probably Caxton's gift: Walcott, 'Inventories of Westminster', 351.

⁴⁵ John W. Legg and William H. St J. Hope, eds., *Inventories of Christchurch* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1902), 93.

material and colour to her family chantry chapel at Salisbury cathedral, as well as vestments given by John Flete when he was prior (1456-66) and two gifts of brother Thomas Lynn (d. 1473-4).⁴⁶ Lynn's presents, a set of valences (also of blue damask) to hang on or near the base of the shrine, one of them with images of St Edward and St John, and a gilded timber canopy for the shrine altar, suggest how large an influence a single monk was allowed to have on the chapel's appearance. The 1520 list has further additions, all unattributed except for Caxton's missal and a burse given by brother John Holland (d. 1503).⁴⁷ They include a cloth with scenes of the life of St Edward, 'hangyng abowte the shryne' (though not necessarily in contact with it), and corresponding to images of the same subjects in the choir and on the east-facing crest of the high altar screen.⁴⁸

This brings us to the relics listed in the second section. It has already been noted that objects associated with Christ are listed first, and that this reflects a convention found in 'simple' relic lists. But their primacy is not just conventional. The Holy Blood, Ascension stone, large piece of the Holy Cross and Crucifixion nail, along with the Virgin's girdle, were much the most generously indulgenced of the abbey's relics, and by this measure, as well as intrinsically, the most important after the body of St Edward.⁴⁹ Apart from two spines from

⁴⁶ Michael A. Hicks, 'The Piety of Margaret, Lady Hungerford (d. 1478)', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38 (1987): 29-30. Possibly, Eleanor Berkeley (d. 1455) is intended here instead. For Flete and Lynn, see Pearce, *Monks of Westminster*, 137-8, 154.

⁴⁷ For Holland, see Pearce, *Monks of Westminster*, 162.

⁴⁸ For this imagery generally at Westminster, see Binski, *Westminster Abbey*, 52-76; idem, 'Abbot Berkyng's Tapestries and Matthew Paris's Life of Edward the Confessor', *Archaeologia* 109 (1991): 85-100.

⁴⁹ Flete recorded the indulgences: Flete, *History of Westminster*, 74-5.

the crown of thorns, and a piece of the Holy Sepulchre listed in a purse reliquary later on, other relics of Christ are not specified in the inventories. Flete, however, itemises about forty, and while relatively few of these were permanently indulgenced, the temporary indulgencing by a bishop of Llandaff in 1262 of a piece of bread from the Last Supper suggests a potential that was latent in all of them.⁵⁰ It is the same with the Virgin Mary: Flete counts ten items associated with her, the inventories only two, the girdle and a single hair. The difference exposes the complexity of monastic involvement with sacred objects during a period of robust institutional development at Westminster. Flete, studying idealism, wrote in order to make his readers effective advocates for the abbey's loftiest claims. His opening apology states that it is useful, virtuous and sensible for clerics to know precisely what it is that entitles their institutions to respect, a gnosis acquired in part by granular scrutiny of relics.⁵¹ By contrast, the auditors of the shrine-chapel were concerned with security and accountability. They had to monitor objects which were occasionally removed from safekeeping for ritual use, and normally stored in an environment which might be shadowy, bustling and permeated by people they did not know and could not trust. The dangers are indicated by statements that gold from the holy thorn reliquary was lost 'atte procession in the Rogacion dayes' and that brother Thomas Westow had 'loste' a relic of St Anne covered in gilded silver.⁵² This is why the auditors were primarily concerned with autonomous, portable, easily liquefied objects. Accordingly, the great shrine of St Edward, which when uncovered was skied beyond the reach of even the most brazen thief, and anyway too heavy

⁵⁰ Ibid., 69; David Crouch, ed., *Llandaff Episcopal Acta 1140-1287* (Cardiff: South Wales Record Society, 1988), 92. I owe this reference to Chris Woolgar.

⁵¹ Flete, *History of Westminster*, 33.

⁵² Westow occurs fleetingly in Pearce, *Monks of Westminster*, 162.

to lift, is not included in the inventories. There was no need to list it.⁵³ However, numerous smaller relic-containers – phylacteries, purses, boxes, crosses, shrines, tabernacles and dishes – are recorded, some with the comment that they contain a specific relic, or else ‘many’ or ‘divers’ relics, whose identity was irrelevant to the task in hand but not unimportant thereby.

Attempting to see through the inventories into Flete’s list, or vice versa, involves a lot of guesswork. One might suppose, for example, that a ‘cupp of copre & gilt with the Relikes for the Estirday’ contained the bread indulged in 1262, or that ‘vijj crossis grete & smale siluer & gilt’ included the miraculous ‘swimming’ object (‘*crucem natantem*’) that Flete says crossed the English Channel by itself. To read thus, however, is implicitly to insist on the overriding spiritual value of the relics, against which concern with reliquaries and other items is bound to seem inferior, if not negatively materialistic. In fact, the auditors’ approach has positive benefits for historians, particularly those concerned with material things and their curation. Thus, while the inventories itemise only two relics of the Virgin, they reveal that her girdle was kept in a long crystal box provided with three protective cases, and that the hair from her head was displayed next to other relics in a gilded silver reliquary combining her image with those of two angels. They also list three other images of the Virgin, one engraved on a silver-gilt jewel and two carved of ivory, one in a tabernacle, the other wearing a gold crown and holding the infant Christ. Of all this Flete records only one ivory image, given by Thomas Becket, ‘excessively beautiful and very important to him’.⁵⁴ This desirable object, in all likelihood one of the two mentioned in the inventories, was not a reliquary, but rather a relic by association with its donor. This fact explains Flete’s unwonted lapse into iconography, a subject the auditors found particularly useful. Because the imagery they

⁵³ Contrastingly, it was the only reliquary recorded in 1540.

⁵⁴ Flete, *History of Westminster*, 70.

record was meaningful in relation to both the relics and the general ambience of the chapel, the inventories necessarily convey aspects of the collection's spiritual as well as artistic character. For example, they provide not only a developed idea of the representation of St Edward and St John vis-à-vis the shrine, but also a stronger sense than we would otherwise have of the conditions that existed for devotional viewing. As with other inventories of the type, this point can be extended to the precious materials and reliquary forms (e.g. shrines, phylacteries) that are listed.⁵⁵ To the extent that the setting automatically caused the association of these things with sanctity, the auditors could not avoid allusion to the abbey's spiritual as well as material capital, and the modern reader has every reason to think them conscious of the fact. The point is nicely evoked by their habit of conflating reliquaries and relics: thus, for example, 'a Relike of seynt Anne siluer & gilt', 'a litle Relike like a lanterne with þe vestment of seynt Petre' and so on. Indeed, this seems an obvious choice of words given that later medieval reliquaries tended to dominate visually what they contained even where they identified it.

In fact, it would be fruitless to distinguish between the sacred and the merely ancillary in such a list. Everything in the collection was in a meaningful sense transfigured by virtue of saintly patronage, constant contact with relics and (or) proximity to St Edward's body. The non-hierarchical organisation of most of section two reflects this, even if not actually caused by it. The auditors were not taxonomists, and it is up to the modern reader to group the objects he or she finds most interesting. The art historian, interested in reliquaries, notices seven objects called heads and six called arms. As recorded here, both types are broadly revealing. The descriptions show that a variety of containers was used to hold the heads, and

⁵⁵ Compare the observations in Cynthia Hahn, 'What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?', *Numen* 57 (2010): 309-10.

thus that ‘head’ need not refer to a so-called ‘talking reliquary’ whose form revealed its contents.⁵⁶ St Ethelbert’s head, the only royal one, was in a ‘cas[e]’ of gilded silver decorated with precious stones, whereas those of saints Benedict, Margaret, Ursula and Ouen are called ‘headis of siluer & gilt’, which is different. A special container was perhaps required to show that it was, in the words of a later report, ‘full of Braines & vncorrupted’.⁵⁷ St Maurice’s head was in a ‘standing cup’ and St Swithun’s in a gold-painted box. Flete does not mention this last item, but he does record ‘crustas’ from the head of St Christopher. That the auditors record no head of this saint suggests that these relics were pieces of dry flesh associated with his torture rather than pieces of his skull.⁵⁸ If it is accepted that the inventories effectively account for the bulk of Westminster’s relics, then some arm-relics must have been kept in larger reliquaries. Flete records ten arms, whereas the inventories specify six, only two of them associated with named saints.⁵⁹ Unlike ‘head’, the term ‘arm’ as used here does clearly indicate a form of reliquary. These objects were paired off by the auditors according to material type, probably because they stood or lay together in the chapel’s relic-safe. Those of St Bartholomew and St Thomas were silver-gilt, another pair was of silver-plated wood with

⁵⁶ See Barbara D. Boehm, ‘Body-Part Reliquaries: the State of Research’ *Gesta*, 36, no. 1 (1997): 8-19.

⁵⁷ Montague R. James, ‘Two Lives of St. Ethelbert, King and Martyr’, *English Historical Review* 32 (1917): 221.

⁵⁸ Flete, *History of Westminster*, 71. Christopher’s martyrdom included having a red-hot helmet (or, according to Caxton’s translation, a cross) put on his head: *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Giovanni P. Maggioni, 2nd edn. (Milan: SISMEL, 1999), 2: 668.

⁵⁹ Flete, *History of Westminster*, 70-2: i.e. arms of saints Bartholomew, Thomas the apostle, Vincent, Cyriacus, Felicitas, Vitalis, ‘Serus’, Gregory, Sylvester, and Helen.

gilding only on the hands, while the other two were also substantially of wood and silver, but had white hands and precious stones.

The names of St Edward and St Peter are sprinkled through the list of relics like leitmotifs, expressing these saints' distinctive and pervasive local importance. Two rings of St Edward are listed near the beginning, while at the end there is a crystal ball for cleaning the more important of them (i.e. the one set with a large sapphire and shown in the Wilton Diptych). Next, images of Edward and John are recorded on a 'jewel' of silver and gilt, a term suggesting an object that did not incorporate a relic, but may, like Becket's ivory Virgin, have been one per se. Then there is the little lantern reliquary containing part of a vestment of St Peter cited above, which Pamela Tudor-Craig, working from the 1520 inventory, perceptively identified with the centrally placed motif in the miniature for the feast of relics in the Litlington Missal (Westminster Abbey MS 34, fol. 254) (Figure 3).⁶⁰ An alms dish of St Edward held another fragment of one of Peter's vestments and a vessel of beryl and silver contained unspecified 'Relikes' of Edward. Following this is a relic of St Peter in a cruciform container, similarly unspecified but probably the fragment of his cross that, on Flete's evidence, was given to Westminster by St Edward together with the maniple of St Paul (also listed in the inventories). An ivory tabernacle with images of Peter and 'other apostles' is grouped with two objects of the same type but different imagery. Excepting the crystal ball, the last of these entries is for St Edward's psalter. Other relics of both saints will have been stored in common reliquaries (Flete lists wax, incense and a beard-hair of St Peter) and identified by labels the auditors did not need to rehearse.

⁶⁰ Tudor-Craig, 'Large Letters', 109. Tudor-Craig was unaccountably innocent of the relic of St Ethelbert's head, which is probably also referred to in the miniature.

Lest these sequences of entries appear disjointed, and thereby unrevealing of the specific synergies that medieval viewers identified, it is worth remembering that the inventories were made for use only in the presence of what they record. The point that the auditors could see, for example, the arm of St Thomas displayed near the Holy Blood and Virgin's girdle, both of which it had touched *propria manis*, and also that they grasped the significance of the juxtaposition, is imperceptible if the inventories are regarded as mere lists.⁶¹ It only emerges when these documents are imagined back into the spatial, material and psychological contexts of their making and use. Art historians have done this successfully for painting and sculpture at Westminster, using medieval interest in particular relics to throw light on issues of meaning and patronage. The inventories invite a similar approach.⁶²

Section two ends with objects related to the care and display of the relics. Besides various candlesticks (one of which 'lackyd' in 1479), and the crystal ball, there were three long, collapsible benches 'to sett the shrynes upon' on the feast of relics, when visitors, encouraged to the chapel by a public crier paid by the monks, could obtain indulgences amounting to over

⁶¹ That the image of St Thomas catching the girdle was popular in late medieval England (see e.g. Peter A. Newton, *The County of Oxford: a Catalogue of Medieval Stained Glass* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 30) supports this claim. For broader English context, see Richard F. Green, 'Sir Gawain and the *Sacra Cintola*', *English Studies in Canada* 11 (1985): 1-11.

⁶² In addition to Binski, *Westminster Abbey*, and Tudor-Craig, 'Large Letters', see Paul Binski and Emily Guerry, 'Seats, Relics and the Rationale of Images in Westminster Abbey, Henry III to Edward II', in *Westminster: the Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey*, ed. Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Brown (Leeds: Maney, 2015), 180-204.

100 years' remission.⁶³ There was also an iron chain 'to fasten the same shrynes' on this occasion. (The same security measure was adopted for the Stone of Scone, also kept in the chapel but evidently not in the shrine-keeper's care.)⁶⁴ It is not obvious how this chain was attached, but the shrines may have had cast lugs which could accept a chain or lock. This information implies two things, first that significant numbers of relics were removed from their safe for exhibition in the chapel only once a year (or twice, if they were also shown on relic Sunday), and secondly, that on this occasion they were displayed within larger containers, perhaps lidless ones that viewers could peer into from close quarters.⁶⁵ This arrangement, as opposed to the array of individual reliquaries imagined by the Litlington Missal's artist, makes perfect sense given the extraordinary value of the objects involved and the crowded, constricted nature of the space. A cosmetic item, a stained cloth with images of the Twelve Apostles, was for hanging around and dignifying the benches.⁶⁶ In 1479, the second section ends with the addition, noted previously, of the 'capp' (cape) of purple velvet

⁶³ For the indulgences, see Flete, *History of Westminster*, 74-5. For the crier, see Barbara Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 44. On the question of visitor access, see Warwick Rodwell, 'The Cosmati Pavements and their Topographical Setting: Addressing the Archaeological Issues', in *Westminster*, ed. Rodwell and Tatton-Brown, 171-6.

⁶⁴ Warwick Rodwell, *The Coronation Chair and the Stone of Scone: History, Archaeology and Conservation* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2013), 17.

⁶⁵ Special vestments for relic Sunday were listed in 1540: Walcott, 'Inventories of Westminster', 326, 330.

⁶⁶ One must read the 1520 inventory for confirmation that this cloth was for the benches on the feast of relics rather than the regular relic-safe.

given for the Child of Israel by brother John Hilston. This image, whose name and status are curious, is recorded earlier among the relics: ‘a shryne peyntid with the Child of Israel’. Hilston’s garment confirms it was a sculpture, evidently displayed in a decorated wooden case. That it represented Christ is perfectly obvious (compare Hosea 11:1, adumbrating Matthew 2:15), but in what guise is unknown. Quite possibly, it took the form of a seated Virgin and Child.

The third section of the 1467 and 1479 inventories is relatively brief. It lists the plate and vestments for the altar in Henry V’s chantry chapel, including bankers for the lateral benches, carpet and an ivory pax. The royal arms identified on the bankers are unusual examples of heraldry in the inventories.⁶⁷ Here, the altar-clothes and priestly vestments are presented as matching sets (three of them). A silver-gilt image of St John the Evangelist in a tabernacle, which belonged on the altar itself, is reported ‘stolen of a long tyme paste’. This theft, from an elevated space that was difficult to access, underscores this article’s insistence on the vulnerability of portable objects. Henry’s tomb, which stood in the chapel below, is also accounted for, as it had precious metal fittings and an effigy plated with silver. The plates were in situ in 1479, but various components were gone, ‘stolen away in the tyme of [...] dan Richard Tedyngton’. There was a minor compensation for these losses: two gold teeth hanging by a wire from a hand of the effigy (evidently *ex votos*), reported stolen in 1467, were present again by 1479. As with the vestments sent to Islip, it is not in fact clear that Teddington was in charge when the thefts occurred, for the components were missing when he took over from Arundel in 1467.⁶⁸ In any case, the complete absence of Henry V’s tomb

⁶⁷ There are two others in section one (see appendix).

⁶⁸ Hope, ‘Funeral, Monument and Chantry Chapel’, 151, notes this.

and chapel from the 1520 inventory must mean that their care had been delegated to someone other than the shrine-keeper, perhaps because of the depredations the monument had suffered. By 1520 there had been further theft (a relic of St Luke) and some reordering of the inventory's contents.⁶⁹ For example, Hilston's gift to the Child of Israel is recorded along with the image, the horns, minus any mention of St Kenelm, are listed in section two and the furniture for the feast of relics is put with the altar gear in the first section. There had also been numerous additions, mostly presented in section two after the bulk of the relics. Some of these objects are unattributed, including the most important, the leg of St George. Named donors are associated with twelve items, including four quondam shrine-keepers, John Esteney (who was abbot from 1474-98 and referred to thus), Arundel, Waterden and Green.⁷⁰ Like Thomas Lynn before him, John Hilston had also given a second gift. These things, and the present of another monk, John Hillingburgh, were sacral jocalia rather than primary or contact relics of saints. (Esteney's gift was sufficiently picturesque to deserve mention here: 'a mandrakes roote in ffashion of a crosse with the ymage of oure lorde annexyd to the same crusified'.) However, brother Christopher Goodhappes was able to donate a relic of his name-saint, enclosed in a silver-gilt container shaped 'like the sone'.⁷¹ The picture here is again strikingly different to that arising from Flete's list, which never stoops below the level of abbot when naming patrons.

This evidence for patronage of a major relic-collection illuminates the fugitive subject of individual monastic piety, and the ambitions and opportunities it involved. It complements

⁶⁹ For all these additions, see Westlake, *Westminster Abbey*, 2: 499-501.

⁷⁰ For Esteney, see Smith, *Heads of Religious Houses*, 79; Pearce, *Monks of Westminster*, 148-9.

⁷¹ Pearce, *Monks of Westminster*, 155 (Billingburgh), 182 (Goodhappes).

further information on the same subject in the dissolution inventory, which lists seventeen monastic donors below the status of abbot.⁷² In this later document, some of the same donors emerge, giving one a clearer impression of material commitment to the abbey. Christopher Goodhappes is a case in point: as well as the relic in its monstrance, he gave a frontal with crucifixion imagery, two albs with embroidered apparels showing the Virgin Mary and St Christopher (one with the letters 'X C'), and a pair of red curtains.⁷³ Here, the interest in a name-saint, manifested through imagery, image-juxtaposition and control of an authentic relic, looks simultaneously like normative devotion to an intercessor and an act of self-inscription onto, or into, a bricolage that epitomised the sacredness of a uniquely loved and valued institution. In this way, the particular monk, already a 'living stone' in his monastery's metaphysical fabric, could emphasise his privileged, intimate status through material gifts as well as prayers. This subject has been largely ignored in the past, perhaps because the interdiction of personal property in the Benedictine Rule has led art historians to assume that individual religious could not act as patrons. To this extent, the inventories are valuable for showing that the material culture of personal commemoration which is a defining feature of late medieval religion was not a secular preserve.⁷⁴

Finally, it is noteworthy that female patronage is also prominent in the 1520 inventory. Such patronage was entirely appropriate in the context of a monastic relic-collection but is not

⁷² Walcott, 'Inventories of Westminster', 314, 326, 329, 331-3, 335-42, 346, 349. The inclusion of this information shows that monks made the 1540 inventory.

⁷³ Ibid., 325-6, 338, 340, 342.

⁷⁴ Further on this subject see Julian M. Luxford, *The Art and Architecture of English Benedictine Monasteries, 1300-1540: a Patronage History* (Woodnrdge: Boydell Press, 2005), 104-12.

normally recorded as it is here. Four women donors are mentioned, including the late queens Elizabeth Woodville, who gave oil from St Mary Magdalene's tomb, and Elizabeth of York, who gave a reliquary box made of pomander. Women of lesser standing, Cecily Vaux and Margaret Worsper, gave a precious monstrance and a bugle-horn with silver-gilt embellishments respectively. The monstrance was called 'Cecylle bedyll gyffte', a title suggesting its donor's intention that it would elicit prayers for her soul. It reminds the reader that affluent women could extend their agency into the monastic sphere by means of works of art and other objects. Such information returns something of the variety and texture of the collection, and the faith in precious gifts as commemorative cues that pervaded it, to the now stripped back, disenchanted space of St Edward's chapel.

Locating the relics and equipment within the chapel

Precisely where and by what means all these things were stored are matters of central importance for any reconstruction of how the space around the shrine worked. The monuments that currently define the topography of the chapel were all in place by 1467, giving the modern visitor a tolerably accurate idea of the difficulty of housing the relics and their apparatus in a decent and practical manner. Altogether, the chapel is approximately 11m long by 10m wide in the west, tapering to under 9m at the east end (Figure 4). The shrine with its altar extended for about half the chapel's length and about a quarter of the breadth. Great tombs hedged the shrine in on all sides except the west, where the sedilia for those serving the shrine-altar were located. The dignity and proper function of the shrine required a certain amount of circumambient space: it simply could not be too closely mobbed. At no point was this space more than 4m across. In short, there is no obvious location in this intensively sweated space for what the inventories record. Were it not for the eyewitness

depositions mentioned previously, given in a dispute of 1498 between the abbots of Westminster and Chertsey and the dean of Windsor about Henry VI's burial, one would be reduced to pure guesswork.⁷⁵

From an early date, the relics are supposed to have been connected in some way with the altar of the Holy Trinity, which stood at the east end of the chapel under the axial arch. This is a reasonable assumption, because Henry V's monument displaced this altar, and his will provides for the relocation of the relics.⁷⁶ There is no need to imagine an elaborate display of reliquaries around this altar, like that shown in the well-known drawing from St Augustine's abbey at Canterbury.⁷⁷ While some major relics were presumably exposed on important festivals, W. H. St John Hope was surely right to suggest that a relic-cupboard, or cupboards, stood near the Trinity altar.⁷⁸ When, in the 1440s, the high altar reredos was built, effectively hiving the chapel off from the presbytery, the shrine space was concentrated in a way that must have increased the sense of clutter produced by cupboard, chests and folding benches.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ David M. Palliser, 'Royal Mausolea in the Long Fourteenth Century', in *Fourteenth Century England III*, ed. Mark W. Ormrod (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 15-16, mistrusts these depositions, but this is unnecessary on any point relating to this article.

⁷⁶ Hope, 'Funeral, Monument and Chantry Chapel', 146, 153; Binski, *Westminster Abbey*, 147-8. A silver-gilt tabernacle with a Trinity image recorded in the inventories was possibly related to this altar.

⁷⁷ This drawing, made c. 1410-13, presumably represents a festive rather than permanent arrangement: see Raleigh A. Skelton and Paul D. A. Harvey, eds., *Local Maps and Plans from Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 107-17.

⁷⁸ Hope, 'Funeral, Monument and Chantry Chapel', 146.

⁷⁹ For the reredos, see Binski, *Westminster Abbey*, 148-52.

By the 1450s, the period remembered by the eyewitnesses, Henry V's chantry chapel was complete, providing ample room for the vestments and plate listed in the third section of the 1467 and 1479 inventories. Some reliquaries were evidently kept there as well: section two of each document mentions four 'great' – that is, relatively large – shrines standing 'in the chapel of kyng Herry the vth'.⁸⁰ However, this specific indication implies that none of the other things listed in section two, or anything in section one, was stored in the royal chantry chapel. They must have been kept in the shrine-space below.

In fact, it seems that for an unspecified period in the mid-fifteenth century, most of the relics and collateral objects were kept in a single cupboard next to Henry III's tomb on the north side of the shrine. Probably, this cupboard was simply relocated from under the eastern arch when Henry V's tomb displaced it. In the 1450s, the shrine-keeper had the cupboard moved on the personal orders of Henry VI to a position 'on the baksyde' of the high altar, where it was recorded in 1498 and likely remained until shortly before the abbey's dissolution in January 1540.⁸¹ Neither position is perfectly clear, and to the extent that they are clear, both conflict with notions of spatial propriety arising from modern literature on medieval churches. In this case, at least, necessity evidently trumped both aesthetics and practicality, although never to the extent of crowding St Edward's shrine.

A single witness mentioned the fact that a cupboard held the abbey's relics. He called it simply 'the almery with the Reliques'.⁸² That the other eleven deponents took this for

⁸⁰ The 1467 inventory locates the shrines 'ouer' Henry V's chapel, but it is unnecessary to imagine them placed on a beam or atop the reredos, as both later lists place them 'in' the chapel.

⁸¹ Stanley, *Historical Memorials*, 510 (quotation), 514 (Henry VI's order).

⁸² *Ibid.*, 514.

granted implies that it was the expected arrangement. Naturally, no witness mentioned the location of the three chests holding the altar-gear, but the presence of a 'long coffer byfore the Relykys' in 1520 may suggest that all of the furniture was somehow arranged around the cupboard. This cupboard must have been both tall and compartmentalised inside, as specific reliquaries needed to be easily locatable and perhaps displayed in situ. A tall cupboard would also have been fittingly solemn and impressive and accommodated an internal hierarchy based on elevation. There is evidence for this sort of relic-storage at other monasteries in England. For example, Canterbury cathedral priory had 'a great relic-cupboard' standing north-west of the high altar in 1315. It contained sixty-nine individual reliquaries of different types and sizes. Another cupboard with a relic in it stood behind ('retro') the same altar.⁸³ At Durham cathedral, the shrine chapel behind the high altar was lined on its north and south sides with decorated wooden relic-cupboards. The doors of these cupboards were opened whenever the cover of St Cuthbert's shrine was drawn up, 'that euery man y^t came thither at that time might see the holy reliques therein'.⁸⁴ In neither case is the form of the cupboard described, but the thirteenth-century examples surviving at the cathedrals of Bayeux and Winchester may reflect the general form of the Westminster cupboard, particularly if it dated from the time when the presbytery was rebuilt.⁸⁵ It is reasonable to expect that any large piece of furniture juxtaposed with the shrine and royal tombs was decoratively painted. Durham's cupboards were 'uarnished and finelye painted and gilted finely ouer with little

⁸³ Legg and Hope, *Inventories of Christchurch*, 39, 80-93.

⁸⁴ *Rites of Durham*, ed. Joseph T. Fowler (Durham, 1903), 5.

⁸⁵ Both illustrated in Simon Jervis, 'The Venerable Chapel Armoire', in *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years 1093-1993*, ed. John Crook (Chichester: Phillimore, 1993), 207-14.

images uerye seemly and beautifull to behould'. A relic-cupboard on the north side of the high altar at Selby abbey, destroyed in 1906, was also painted and gilded in its original state.⁸⁶

Westminster's relic-cupboard can only have had a visually awkward relationship to Henry III's tomb (Figure 5). The depositions of 1498 variously state that the relics stood 'by' this tomb, 'adjoined' it and stood 'between' it and the shrine.⁸⁷ Because Henry's monument stands on a stepped plinth, the back of the cupboard will not actually have touched it, but must have come close to doing so. As even partial obscuration of the founder's tomb now seems unconscionable, this requires an explanation. There are two ways of looking at the matter. First, the closeness may reflect a positive choice relating to Henry III's prerogative as builder of both the church and the shrine at its heart. Intimate juxtaposition of the dead king's remains with the relics was possibly considered a merited advantage by monks who could, in theory, have moved the cupboard to the south side of the chapel after 1422. An indication of belief in the value of such propinquity exists in the niches in the tomb's chest, which were grated and thus designed to hold valuable *mobilia*. As other scholars have noted, it is likely that these items were relics, an arrangement documented at Glastonbury, where numerous relics were displayed on the tomb of Abbot John of Kent (d. 1303).⁸⁸ Secondly, and

⁸⁶ William H. St John Hope, 'On the Great Almery for Relics of late in the Abbey Church of Selby, with Notes on some other Receptacles for Relics', *Archaeologia* 60 (1907): 421.

⁸⁷ Stanley, *Historical Memorials*, 508, 509, 511, 514.

⁸⁸ For example, O'Neilly and Tanner, 'Shrine of St. Edward', 132; Binski, *Westminster Abbey*, 101-2. The Glastonbury relics were displayed 'super sepulchrum', i.e. on or above the grave. Kent had a stone tomb of unknown form 'nobly located' on the north side of the high altar (Carley and Howley, 'Relics at Glastonbury', 596-7).

conversely, the deciding impetus may have been simultaneously pragmatic and conscious of more recent patronage. There was no room next to Richard II's tomb without blocking an entrance to the shrine chapel from the presbytery, and there were recent floor monuments – those of John Waltham, bishop of Salisbury (d. 1395) and Thomas of Woodstock, duke of Gloucester (d. 1397) – next to the tombs of Edward I, Edward III and Philippa of Hainault (Figure 4).⁸⁹ The cupboard was probably too large to fit into the turning bay in front of Eleanor of Castile's monument. Thus, a position overlapping Henry III's tomb was chosen for want of an alternative, and in default of putting the cupboard where in fact it eventually went, at the west end of the shrine. The monks' initial reluctance to station a large cupboard where it would cramp the service of the shrine altar is perfectly understandable. When constrained to do so *faute de mieux*, they must have placed it at right angles to the sedilia, parallel with John Waltham's tomb-slab; although whether on the north or south side of the chapel is unknown. If Henry VI had not insisted on burial on the north side of the shrine chapel then the cupboard would presumably have been left where it was, partially obscuring Henry III's tomb.

But Henry VI did insist. The depositions recall how initial diffidence gave way to a powerful and reiterative conviction that he should lie 'in' or 'nyghe' the place where the relics stood in their cupboard. Two witnesses recalled that the mason John Thirsk marked out with a pick the length and breadth of the royal grave on the chapel pavement in the presence of the king, abbot, shrine-keeper and various others.⁹⁰ In so doing, he did not simply chip around the base

⁸⁹ For the flat monuments, see Tim Tatton-Brown, 'The Pavement in the Chapel of St Edward the Confessor, Westminster Abbey', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 153 (2000): 72-3.

⁹⁰ Stanley, *Historical Memorials*, 508, 513.

of the cupboard, for the more detailed recollection of the episode involves Henry VI personally pacing out a seven foot plot 'befoore and nyghe the place wher the Reliques than stode'. This plot has been identified with a set of plain stone slabs intruded into the Cosmati-work pavement of the shrine chapel, overlapping the eastern half of Henry III's tomb.⁹¹ If this is correct then the precise location of the relic-cupboard was alongside the western half of Henry III's monument. While it is theoretically possible that the plain stone slabs were inserted as a base for the relic-cupboard, there was no obvious need for such a base, and a position further west would have left more room for visitors to circulate around the east end of the shrine.

As suggested previously, Henry V's chantry chapel never held the bulk of Westminster's relics. This needs to be emphasised in light of the instructions in the king's will, and the fitting out of the chapel with lockable stone cupboards ingeniously built into the fabric around its altar (Figure 6). Henry directed that the relics be put into his chapel, but even if the evidence of the depositions is set aside, there is simply not enough room there for all that is mentioned in section two of the inventories.⁹² The larger two cupboards are 1.8m high by 1.5m wide, but only 0.33 m deep. The smaller pair, flanking the altar in the east wall, are of the same height and depth but only 0.65m wide; and the depth was in each case originally reduced by a countersunk wooden lining. As such, they are too shallow to have received shrines described as 'great', let alone all the other reliquaries and images specified.⁹³ It is thus

⁹¹ See Tatton-Brown, 'Pavement in the Chapel', 76.

⁹² Hope, 'Funeral, Monument and Chantry Chapel', 153.

⁹³ These cupboards cannot be identical with the four shrines specified in the inventory, as they are immovable parts of the fabric. It is equally unlikely that the inventoried shrines were

an open question what these cupboards contained, unless it was simply the things in section three of the earlier inventories. They may have been intended for a proportion of the relic-collection which they never actually received. There is a fifth recess directly over the altar, approximately 1.14m high, 1.6m wide and 0.18m deep and also made with lockable wooden doors. It was certainly designed for precious items, although not necessarily relics. What would fit particularly well here, and be situationally appropriate, is a table containing various relics and also sacred imagery, like the reliquary triptychs painted with the Annunciation, Crucifixion and Majesty that are recorded at Canterbury in 1315.⁹⁴ But there is no evidence for anything of the sort in the inventories. It is always possible, of course, that the cupboards were stocked with jewels and relics belonging to Henry V's household chapel. Inventories of objects from this chapel pledged to fund the Agincourt expedition in 1415 include many relics as well as precious metal images and plate.⁹⁵ Items from this source would presumably have answered Henry's desire that his chapel contain relics equally well.

Conclusion

simply storage chests. For such items, the auditors would have used 'chest' or 'coffer': they used 'shrine' for reliquaries.

⁹⁴ Legg and Hope, *Inventories of Christchurch*, 86.

⁹⁵ Kew, The National Archives, E 101/44/26, partially duplicated in E 101/46/6. See Jenny Stratford, *Richard II and the English Royal Treasure* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 423-4; compare 121-3. The relics included one of the seamless robe of Christ (*ibid.*, 424; compare 362-3). Others (not printed *ibid.*) included pieces of the True Cross and relics of the Virgin Mary and saints Cedd, Christopher, Edward of Carnarvon (i.e. Edward II), John the Baptist, Martin, Thomas of Lancaster, and a companion of St Ursula. Unspecified relics are also listed, some in a 'table' of the sort that may have stood above Henry V's altar.

The fact that the Westminster inventories have attracted little previous interest is partly a function of their date. Any thirteenth- or fourteenth-century document that itemised a major relic-collection at the ceremonial heart of London would have been pulled into scholarship long ago, for what it revealed of a religious and artistic environment typically considered more vital than that of the century before the Reformation. Yet the collection was just as culturally important between 1467 and 1520 as in those periods when English monasticism is supposed to have been less materialistic. It will have been equally useful and popular, and the ‘litle boxe of siluer enamelid, therein to put þe offryng money’ will have rung just as often with coins: the oblations recorded in the sacrists’ rolls in the 1470s and 1480s were in fact very healthy.⁹⁶ By any relevant measure, its power, like that of the chapel it occupied, remained steady. The inventories communicate something of this power and thus add value to the modern experience of visiting St Edward’s chapel.

As this article has tried to show, the documents are more than viscerally suggestive. Careful reading of their texts, and attention to their form, language and condition, helps one to understand the scope of the collection, its materials and organisation, its concentration, the bureaucracy of its management and its desirableness as expressed through patronage and theft. The wider current scholarly narrative of the cult of relics, mesmerised as it is by the egregious and exemplary, and fixated on pilgrim experience, has paid little attention to the local and contingent and has thus generally ignored documents of the sort examined here. This selectivity comes at the expense of a holistic history of the purpose and function of relics, one which accounts for the fact that relics absorbed routine attention and effort precisely because they were of pervasive importance. When written, this history will be

⁹⁶ Ben Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 162-3, 229-31.

indebted to auditors and their inventories as well as chroniclers, hagiographers and the products of their imaginations.

Appendix

Inventory of the keeper of St Edward the Confessor's shrine, 1479 (Westminster Abbey Muniments 9478).⁹⁷

This endentur tripartite made þe ixth day of þe monyþ of Octobre in þe xixth yere of þe Reigne of kyng Edward þe iiijth witnessith þat dan Richard Tedyngton late kepre of seynt Edwardes shrine and of þe Relikes of seynt petre chirch of Westminstre hath delyuerd unto John Watirden successour of þe seid dan Richard. ffirst iij long chestes for to put in þe vestementes [/] and oþer clothes belonging to þe seid shrine. Also ij clothes to covir þe ymages of seint Edward & seynt john theuangelist in lent. Also a cloth for to covir þe tombe of kyng Edward with long shankes. Also iiij white tapetes, iij tapetes of blewe, v rede tapetes, ij carpetes, vj Quysshons of tapstry work with *dona nobis requiem*, of which vj quysshons iij bith \now/ utterly & past amendement. [/] ix Quysshons of cloth of gold, & oon of þem a long quyshon of cloth of gold. vj peir curteyns for seynt Edwardes awter. ffirst oon peir rede, þe second blewe, þe third white, þe iiijth black, þe vth tawny & þe vjth grene. A long curteyne of tawny beside þe seid vj peir. ix auterclothes with frontelles upon them. The first of rede þe grounde with braunches & honysocles [/] of grene veluet, flours of golde, the second of red bawdkyn dyaper with leves of golde, þe third of olde dyaper cotidiane, þe iiijth of blewe with

⁹⁷ Parchment: 260mm × 633mm. Line breaks are indicated by ‘/’ in square brackets.

Interlineations are indicated ‘∨’; punctuation has been rationalised and the suffix ‘-es’ supplied where appropriate.

braunches of white & briddes of golde, the vth of blewe colour with ffaukons & oþer briddes of golde, the vith white with briddes & braunches of golde, the vijth white vynes & boterflies of grene, the viijth black, the ixth white Tar[/]turn with a rede crosse for lent. Also ij newe awtertowels and ij olde. A wpyng towel. Also viij corpras and viij corpras caaces. The first cas rede satyn with grene braunches & veluet with flours of golde. The second veluet with an ymage of seynt Edward. The thrid is olde rede with lyons of golde. The iiijth blewe with the letter *E* and sterres of golde. The vth [/] purpull with garters. The sixth blewe with bestes in scripture *Odio*. The vijth white with briddes & braunches of golde, and the viijth blewe veluet. Item a corporas cas \& a corporas/ of golde wrought with perles & stones, the which is kept in the vestrye. Also v chesiples with stoles, fanons, awbs & amytes. The first rede with grene braunches of grene veluet and floures of golde. [/] The seconde purpull with awbe the Salutation of oure lady thereupon with roses of golde, with stole & fanon of the same. The which was gevyn to the chapel of Islipp by our ffadir abbot George in þe tyme of þe seid dan Richard Tedyngton. The thrid is rede bawdekyn with flours of golde. the iiijth blewe with roses of golde. The vth white with briddes & braunches [/] of golde. Also iij awbis. Þe first of paris blak veluet, a chevorn of white with lyons hed of white. The seconde with white vynes of grene with the armes of Quene Elizabeth. The thrid is rede with smale crownys of golde. The which iij awbis were gevyn to the foresaid chapel of Islipp by the seid abbot George in the seid dan Richardes tyme. Also the [/] pavelles for an awbe of blewe damask, with flours of golde of þe gyft of dan William Wycombe. Item, two massebookes. Also vj bookes for seynt Edwardes masse, on þe Sondays to syng upon. Also ij bookes of cronycles, oon called pollicronykon and the tothir called fflores historiarum. Also a portavs of Salesbury use, the which was lost by sir Richard Widevyle in þe tyme of þe seid [/] dan Richard Tedyngton. Also ij quays, oon with colettes & gospels for our lady girdyll, the tothir of þe Relikes. Also a chalice of siluer & gilt weying xliij^{ti} unces. Two cruettes of siluer & gilt weying xij unces.

A pax bred of siluer & enameld weying vj unces. A box of siluer & gilt weying iiij unces. ij cruettes of Tyn. A staff of tree and a paft covurd with siluer to [/] bere þe crosse upon holy Rode daye. Item xvij hornys, whereof oon was seynt kenelines⁹⁸ horne, which was stolen in the tyme of the seid dan Richard. also ij auterclothes of blewe damask with ij curteyns of þe lady hungerfordes gift. Also ij tewelys þe which bith worn and goon in the tyme of the seid dan Richard. A chesiple. An awbe with stole & fanon of blewe damask [/] embrowdid with flours of golde of þe gift of dan John ffilete late priour. Also a valance of blewe veluet embrowdid with flours of golde with þe ymages of seynt Edward & seynt John the Euangelist, with other ij valance of blewe damask to hong abowte the shryne of the gyft of dan Thomas lyn. Also a criste of tymbre & of bouren⁹⁹ golde to stonde above þe awter of [/] the same dan Thomas gyft.

As to the Relikes. ffirst a cupp of golde with stones with þe blode of our lorde. A white marble stone with þe print of our lordes fote. A grete part of the holy crosse. A longe cofre of cristall woth our lady Girdyll with ij caaces. A point of þe naile. Two thornys closed in golde with a cheyne of golde, the coueryng of them of golde, þe which coueryng was [/] loste atte procession in the Rogacion dayes in the tyme of the seid dan Richard Tedyngton. Three Rynges of golde, two of seynt Edward, þe thrid of seynt Edmund of¹⁰⁰ pounteney with a cheyne of golde. A grete stondyng cas of siluer & gilt garnysshid with stones with the hede of seynt Albright.¹⁰¹ Also two armes of siluer & gilt, oon of seynt [/] Barthilmewe, þe tothir of seynt Thomas of ynde. Also ij oþer armes of tree ceovird with siluer plate and þe handes gilt.

⁹⁸ Kenelm's.

⁹⁹ Burnished, or polished: 'bron' in 1520.

¹⁰⁰ The word 'of' is supplied in a later hand, one of several careful post-Reformation repairs.

¹⁰¹ Ethelbert.

A Relyke of siluer & gilt with an ymage of our lady and ij angels stondyng by her, closed therein our lady heer with other Relikes. A jewell of siluer & gilt and an ymage of seynt Edward & seynt John Theuangelist. A quair[/]foill of siluer & gilt of þe gift of dan Thomas ffreston. Two litle crossis of golde. xiiij ffilectours of siluer & gilt with berell. ij of the same of golde. A Relike of seynt Anne siluer & gilt, þe which was loste by dan Thomas Westowe in þe tyme of the seid dan Richard. vj ffilectours of siluer. viij crossis grete & smale siluer & gilt. vij shrynes [/] grete with berell, garnysshid with siluer & gilt. ffoure smale shrynes with berell of siluer & gilt. A litle cofre of siluer & gilt and berell with the heer of Mary Mawdewyne. A litle Relike like a lanterne with þe vestement of seynt Petre. ij purces, oon with þe Relike of seynt Elizabeths girdill, a noþer with the Relike of the sepulture of our Lord. [/] A spice plate of siluer & gilt. Three hedes of siluer & gilt. the first of seynt Benet, the second of seynte Margarete and þe thrid of seynt Ursula. A stondyng Relike of siluer & gilt with stones, closid with horne, and therein the Relikes of þe xj m^l virgyns. A nothir stondyng Relike of siluer & gilt and berell with þe combe of seynt [/] Dunston and a Cheyne of siluer. A cofur of siluer & berell with Relikes of seynt Edmond of Pounteney. V shrynes of tree, plated with siluer & gilt. iij copre shrynes enamelid. An almesdisshe of seynt Edward, with parte of ij clothes therein, þe toon of seynt Petres vestement and þe toþer of the iij kynges of Coleyne. A stondyng [/] copp of siluer & gilt with the hede of seynt Maurici. A nothir stondyng cupp of berell harnesid with siluer & gilt, with Relikes of seynt Edward. A cupp of copre & gilt with Relikes for the Estirday. A crosse of siluer & gilt stondyng upon a fote with a Relike of seynte Petre. A jewell of siluer & gilt & an ymage of our Lady [/] stondyng in a tabernacle. An ymage of our lady of iverye with a crowne of golde upon hir hede and our lord in hir armes. A stondyng Relike of siluer & gilt garnysshid with stones & berell, and Relikes

of seynt Nicholas. And the hede of seynte Awdewyn¹⁰² closed in siluer & gilt with berell. Three stondyng tabernacles, oon [/] of siluer & gilt with an ymage of the Trinite. the second, with an ymage of our lady of yvery. The thrid of seynt Petre with other apostils of iverye. A stondyng cofre with yimages of yverye and the heer of seynt Cuthbert. Two stondyng boxis peyntid gilt, oon with the hede of seynt Swythen, and a nothir [/] with writynges. A long cofre of siluer & gilt of berell with dyuers Relikes. A cofre of siluer & berell stondyng on iij lions with a Relike called maniphora sancti Pauli. xij Agnus dei of siluer, and oon of them gilt. iiij crosses of siluer, ij of them with cheynes of siluer. iij Agnus dei of copre with Relikes dyuers. ij Agnus [/] dei of siluer & gilt, oon of them iiij square with stones, the tothir rounde with a crosse stondyng upon it of the gift of dan Thomas Clifford. A smale crosse of siluer & gilt with many dyuers Relikes, and euery Relike the writing upon of the gift of Richard Preston Goldsmyth. Two Relikes of siluer, þe oon with þe Relike of [/] seynt Mark, þe tothir with a Relike of seynt Luke. The which Relike of seynt Luke of long tyme hath lackid & yit doth. A flatt cofre copre & gilt. Two armes of tree garnysshid with siluer & stones with white handes. iiij grete shrynes with siluer & gilt. xij boxis with purses & Relikes. A shryne peyntid [/] with the Child of Israel. iiij flatt cofirs of iverye. iij cofirs with cloth of silk in oon of them beeyng ix crossis and vj Agnus dei. A sawter of seynt Edward. A staff with a cowle thereto. A litle boxe of siluer enamelid, therein to put þe offryng money. A candilstike of siluer & berell. Also ij long laton candilstikes. A laton candilstik with iij noses [/] stondyng upon an yron, the which of long tyme hath lackyd and yit doth. A rounde balle of crystal to clene with the ryng of seynt Edward with a safur. iij long stoles with folding fete to sett the shrynes upon in the fest of Relikes. A Cheyne of yron þat tyme to fasten the same shrynes. Also a cloth stayned with the xij apostils [/] to hang aboute the Reliks. iiij grete shrynes stondyng in the

¹⁰² Audoenus (i.e. Ouen).

chapel of kyng Herry the vth. And iij cofirs of iverye with dyuers Relikes. also vj smale laton candilstikes. Also a surplice. \Also a capp of purpull veluet for the Child of Israel of þe gyft of dan John Hylston./

ffor the auter of kyng herry the vth. There is first two candilstykes of siluer & gilt weying xxx^{ti} unces. A chalice of siluer weying xxv^{ti} unces. A peir crueites of tynne. A basyn of tyn. ffoure auterclothes. The first awtercloth of white fustian embrowdird with garters. The seconde of rede with [/] braunches of grene, and lebardes of golde, with a chesiple. The thrid autercloth of rede with the ffrontell of the same afore the table with lyons of golde and white hyndes with chesiple, awbe and amyte of the same. The iiijth a blewe autercloth with a ffrontell afore the table of the same work as þe rede is, [/] with chesiple, awbe and amyte of the same. Three towels playne. ij costers. A tapet. Two bankers wrought with antelops & swannys, and the armes of the kyng in the myddes. A pax bred of iverye. Also an ymage of seynt John þe Euangelist with a tabernacle of siluer & gilt on the awter table of kyng herry [/] the vth, the which was stolen of a long tyme paste. Also the tombe of kyng herry the vth is complete with the teeth of golde on his hande. Except iij hole flourid delice and ij middilpoyntes of floure delice, and ij lyons and an half, two angels, a balle and a crosse of siluer & gilt, a sepre and an [/] antelop also of siluer & gilt, alle the which were stolen away in the tyme of the seid dan Richard Tedyngton.

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