

## **EDITORS' NOTE**

### **The Chantry Chapel and Effigy of Cardinal Henry Beaufort (1404-1447)**

Cardinal Henry Beaufort is buried before the altar in his chantry chapel, located on the south side of the retrochoir of Winchester Cathedral. He was the second son of John of Gaunt (brother of Edward III; uncle to Richard II and father of Henry IV) and Katherine Swynford, born c.1475, Katherine becoming Gaunt's third wife after a long extramarital affair. The children of their liaison were legitimated in 1407, although this specifically prohibited from any claim to the throne.<sup>1</sup>

As a second son Henry entered church at a young age, and was made bishop of Lincoln at the very early age of twenty-one, in 1397, and was transferred to the see of Winchester in 1404, where he was bishop for 38 years. Beaufort's election as bishop was contentious as it overturned the election by the monks of St Swithun's of their Prior Thomas Neville.<sup>2</sup> Beaufort was made cardinal by Pope Martin V in 1417 but was prevented by Henry V from accepting this until 1427. Beaufort's career over this period in national politics was a chequered one, with periods acting as the Chancellor of England. During the reigns of both Henry V and Henry VI, he made many loans to the crown for campaigns against the French in the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) and made an implacable enemy of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (d.1447). He died 11 April 1447 after making his will and two codicils.<sup>3</sup>

In Beaufort's will he directed that three projects be undertaken at the cathedral in Winchester, the erection of a new great screen, behind the high altar; a new shrine-base for the relics of St Swithun in the retrochoir; and his own chantry chapel to the south of the shrine.<sup>4</sup> The chantry chapel, as specified by the cardinal to his executors, was built by 1476 at the same time as the great screen of the Cathedral.<sup>5</sup> It is likely that Waynflete's chantry was

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<sup>1</sup> C. Allmand, *Henry V*, London: Yale University Press, 1992, 42.

<sup>2</sup> J. Greatrex, 'St Swithun's Priory in the Later Middle Ages', in *Winchester Cathedral, Nine Hundred Years 1093-1993*, ed. J. Crook, Phillimore: Chichester, 1993, 157.

<sup>3</sup> P. & F. Strong, 'The Last Wills and Codicils of Henry V', *English Historical Review*, 96 (1981), 79-102.

<sup>4</sup> J. Crook, 'St Swithun of Winchester', in *Winchester Cathedral, Nine Hundred Years 1093-1993*, ed. J. Crook (Chichester: Phillimore, 1993), 64.

<sup>5</sup> P. Lindley, 'The 'Great Screen' of Winchester Cathedral Part II: Style and Date', *Burlington Magazine*, 135 (1993), 801.

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also built by this date and that the same mason designed both chapels.<sup>6</sup> Beaufort's will stated that the monks of the priory were to celebrate three masses daily for his soul in the chantry chapel, but he did not state how these monks were to be paid, or the funding for the accoutrements within the chapel, such as vestments, wine, etc. The cardinal also requested 10,000 masses to be celebrated for his soul in a very short time after his death, comprising 3,000 Requiem, 3,000 *Rorate Coeli*, 3,000 Holy Ghost and 1,000 Trinity Masses.<sup>7</sup> This was similar to the requests made by Henry V after his death in 1422.<sup>8</sup> Beaufort's will also requested that the Abbey of St Augustine, Canterbury include the bishop in three masses daily for remittance of a debt of £366 13s 4d.<sup>9</sup> In addition, a later codicil to Beaufort's will bequeathed £200 to the dean and canons of Lincoln Cathedral, and requested an obit be observed annually, but in the same codicil the £500 bequeathed to Christ Church, Canterbury appeared to specify no such obligation.<sup>10</sup>



Although Beaufort died in 1447, the major part of the building of the great screen, along with both Beaufort's and Waynflete's chantries, are dated to the 1470s.<sup>11</sup> Therefore his executors undertook their obligations for over thirty years after Beaufort's death. If it was not the original executors then his wishes, expressed in his will, were known to those who completed these building projects and the obligations placed upon them by this document. No records survive for these building works, either costs or contracts, and it may have been that Beaufort's wishes were included within these documents; thereby avoiding any potential problems should his executors have died in the intervening period. But given that Beaufort's effigy in particular was so different from those of bishops before him, those of Edington

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<sup>6</sup> Lindley, 'Great Screen', 799

<sup>7</sup> *Testamenta Vetusta*, ed. Nicolas, p.250; This Mass is based on the text Isaiah 45:8, 'Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above', relating to the annunciation of Christ.

<sup>8</sup> Strong, 'Last Will', 91.

<sup>9</sup> *Testamenta Vetusta*, 251.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 252-3.

<sup>11</sup> Crook, 'St Swithun of Winchester', 64.

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(d.1366) and Wykeham (d.1404), both made from alabaster, it does suggest that some form of document was available to the builders of this chapel in the decades after his death.

The Beaufort chantry chapel is built in similar style to Waynflete's' and both have ceilings in three sections. This tripartite arrangement in Beaufort's chapel has a higher central section and lower sections at the east and west end. The central section contains an angel holding the cardinal's arms, that of the royal family with an outer border of blue and white sections, these denoted his illegitimacy. Other than the arms of Henry VII in the roof bosses of both the presbytery and the chantry chapel of Bishop Richard Fox, this is the only other royal arms in the cathedral. The altar at the east end of the chapel was removed in 1550, along with all stone altars on the order of the privy council and preached by the Bishop of London.<sup>12</sup> The piscina, normally located on the south wall, by the altar has also been removed, although this survives in the chantry chapels of Bishops Wykeham and Waynflete in this location.

The centre of the chapel is dominated by the tomb and effigy of the bishop. The tomb has been subject to many restorations since its inception and the current wooden grilles around it cover an older and possibly brass structure.<sup>13</sup>



The current effigy of the bishop is also not original. The original effigy was described by a visitor to the cathedral in 1635, but was then destroyed by 1642 during the incursions into the cathedral by parliamentary soldiers.<sup>14</sup> This 1635 visit by a Lieutenant Hammond, talked of a wooden effigy on the tomb, a material seen as 'cheap'.<sup>15</sup> The description of a wooden figure suggests that the effigy was created in the same form as Henry V's in Westminster Abbey,

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<sup>12</sup> E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, London, Yale University Press, 1992, 472.

<sup>13</sup> R. N. Quirk, 'The tomb of Cardinal Beaufort', *Winchester Cathedral Record*, 23 (1954), 8.

<sup>14</sup> P. Lindley, 'The Medieval Sculpture of Winchester Cathedral', in *Winchester Cathedral Nine Hundred Years, 1093-1993*, ed. J. Crook, Phillimore: Chichester, 1993, 111.

<sup>15</sup> Lindley, 'Medieval Sculpture', 111.

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that is, a wooden figure covered in silver gilt plates. Henry V's effigy had head, hands and a footrest made of silver, all of which along with many of the silver gilt tiles were lost (or stolen) by the date of inventories made in 1467 and 1479.<sup>16</sup> The survey of the tomb by William St John Hope in 1914 revealed that many of the silver nails holding these tiles onto the effigy were still in place at this date.<sup>17</sup> The effigy of the king was reputed to have been paid for by Katherine de Valois, his queen.<sup>18</sup> While there is no evidence for the covering of Beaufort's wooden effigy in Winchester, it may be surmised these were also silver gilt or brass. But a drawing made for the Garter King of Arms in 1504 of this chapel shows the cardinal dressed in his episcopal robes, wearing a mitre with a cardinal's hat depicted above. In this he holds a staff in his left hand. It is likely in this depiction the clothing was covering the wooden effigy.<sup>19</sup>

The current effigy in the Beaufort chantry chapel is much later and an image of the chapel created in 1665 is in its current form.<sup>20</sup> So the original wooden effigy, although devoid of its tiles, was destroyed in the period between 1635 and 1665 – during the Civil War or Commonwealth period. Over the intervening centuries this effigy depicting the cardinal in his robes and wearing his cardinal's hat, has been described variously as 'vulgar' and 'clumsy'<sup>21</sup> In this way it differs greatly from the surviving effigies of the other bishops in their chantry chapels. In 1635 the drawing shows Beaufort as a bishop of Winchester and where his cardinal's hat is the only concession to this rank. These elements are not seen in the 1665 replacement, where the emphasis is on his higher rank in the church, with little reference to his episcopal role. We can only surmise the intentions of these later sculptors. Their image of the bishop reflected his highest office, not his links to Winchester.

The chantry chapel and original effigy of the Cardinal Beaufort have close links with these components of the monuments of Henry V. Beaufort was an executor of his half-nephew's will and took some part in the construction of the two-storey chapel located in Westminster

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<sup>16</sup> M. Duffy, *Royal Tombs of Medieval England*, Stroud, Tempus Publishing, 2003, 210.

<sup>17</sup> St John Hope, 'Funeral Monument and Chantry Chapel of King Henry the Fifth', *Archaeologia* 65 (1914), 151.

<sup>18</sup> Duffy, *Royal Tombs*, 210.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 107, Figure 44.

<sup>20</sup> 'Tomb of Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester c.1665', F Sandford, *A Genealogical History of the Kings of England* (London 1677), in Duffy, *Royal Tombs*, 239.

<sup>21</sup> G. Cobb, *English Cathedrals the Forgotten Centuries: Restoration and Change from 1530 to the Present Day*, Over Wallop: Thames & Hudson, 1980, 126.

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Abbey. The similarities in their intercessory requests soon after death are also to be noted along with the similarities of their effigies. In both cases these wooden effigies were soon stripped of their riches leaving only the central structure behind, with none of the richness these founders intended.

In many ways the current Beaufort effigy is a tale of the cathedral, its richness and significance alongside a story of destruction and survival. While many might consider the current Beaufort effigy less than elegant, it is a tale of survival and commitment to the founder in a building that also shares these traits.

**CINDY WOOD**

**Photographs: Simon Newman**