

EDWARD II, POPE JOHN XXII AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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IT is generally assumed that Pope John XXII officially conferred the status of "studium generale" upon the University of Cambridge in 1318. The assumption is that, before this date, Cambridge had not yet acquired a status equal to that of Oxford, which had been recognized as a "studium generale ex consuetudine" for over a century. Recent research into this matter, however, would now seem to make a revision of this traditional view necessary; and would indicate that there is a just demand for a reassessment of the position of Cambridge University during the first hundred years of its existence. It would, furthermore, appear profitable to examine the circumstances which prompted the papal letter of 1318, as there are sufficient grounds for believing that a causal relationship exists between the establishment of the Society of the King's Scholars in Cambridge in 1317 and Edward II's petition to Pope John, of which the apostolic award was the direct outcome. There is, moreover, good reason to suppose that the significance of the coming of royal patronage to Cambridge has not been fully appreciated; and the consideration may be advanced that in all probability the University owes a greater debt to its first royal foundation as a more immediate and effective stimulus to collegiate development than to Peterhouse, the earliest of its colleges.

As the Society of the King's Scholars appears to occupy such an important place in the evolution of Cambridge University in the fourteenth century, it is only fitting that its origins and wider significance be first discussed. And in the course of this discussion the question naturally arises as to why the king chose to send his household Scholars to the smaller and less celebrated "studium" and not to Oxford, which, by all accounts, was then at the peak of its prestige.

On 7 July 1317, Edward II issued a writ¹ to the sheriff of Cambridgeshire ordering him to pay from the revenues of his bailiwick sums necessary for the maintenance of John de Baggeshote, clerk, and twelve other children of the Chapel Royal whom the king had sent to be educated in the schools at Cambridge.² As far as is known, this defective writ remains the earliest extant evidence for the existence of the Society of the King's Scholars. Unfortunately, the compressed nature of the document does not allow us to say with complete accuracy how long the Society

¹ The writ is printed in *Documents relating to the University and Colleges of Cambridge* (ed. by the Queen's Commissioners, London, 1852), i. 66-67. It was sealed at Buckby, Northamptonshire, where the king was then in residence. See C. H. Hartshorne, *The Itinerary of King Edward the Second* (presentation copy in Cambridge University Library, privately printed, 1861), p. 19.

² Both A. E. Stamp and W. W. Rouse Ball assumed that when this writ was issued the Society had not yet come into existence. They considered it to be a preparatory step taken by the king before sending his Scholars to Cambridge. The arrival in Cambridge on 9 July 1317 of Baggeshote and ten Scholars, journeying from the court at Buckby, was interpreted by each of these writers as the first settlement of the King's Scholars at the University. See Stamp, *Admissions to Trinity College, Cambridge* (ed. Rouse Ball and J. A. Venn, London, 1916), i. 82-83; cf. also Rouse Ball, *The King's Scholars and King's Hall* (privately printed, Cambridge, 1917), pp. 2-3. This assumption is open to dispute on two accounts. Firstly, it disregards the tense of the verb, "envoyer", used in the writ. The medieval French form, "nous eioms envoiez", almost certainly proves that the establishment of the Society was anterior to the writ. ("Come nous eioms envoiez noz chers clerics Johan de Baggeshote et douze autres einfaunz de notre chapelle a luniversite de Cantebr' a demorer y en estody (a noz coustages pour profiter. . ."). Secondly, in the writ of 7 July the number of Scholars is given as twelve; only ten accompanied Baggeshote to Cambridge two days later. The following explanation is suggested: the first complement of Scholars, consisting of twelve Chapel children with their warden John de Baggeshote, was settled in Cambridge at some date before the issue of this writ. At a later date, the Society paid a visit to the court. (For an example of such a visit, see Rouse Ball, *op. cit.* pp. 6-8, where interesting details are given of a Christmas visit to the court at York in 1319.) After a short stay, they left the court, then at Buckby, to return to Cambridge. If two of the original Scholars remained behind, this would account for the discrepancy between the ten who arrived in Cambridge on 9 July and the "twelve" mentioned in the writ. (After the Christmas visit to York in 1319, no less than three of the Scholars were left behind in the city; see Rouse Ball, *op. cit.* p. 8.) If this interpretation is correct, one may assume that this writ exhorting the sheriff of Cambridgeshire to make payment of arrears in their allowances (the sums due to the Scholars necessarily become "arrears" if the language of the writ is translated in a past sense) was issued to coincide exactly with the return of the Scholars to Cambridge.

had then been functioning; although from the wording of the writ it is certain that it was of recent origin.

There can be little doubt that Edward II's academic conception marks a new departure in the sphere of English university history. Sufficient evidence has been found to prove that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries several kings had on occasion made a practice of maintaining individual clerks in the schools.¹ Generally speaking, the motive behind royal monetary assistance to clerks was no more than a desire to grant the requests of relatives or other members of the court circle who had petitioned the king to sponsor an advanced educational training for deserving protégés. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that in the thirteenth century at any rate expediency rather than charity or patronage was often an important consideration behind money grants made by the king; and that a large proportion of the awards made in the reign of Henry III were given with a view towards cementing military alliances across the Channel or were used as minor pawns in the diplomatic chess board.² However this may be, it is clear that before the opening of the fourteenth century, royal support for clerks at the English Universities had, at best, been both desultory and confined to individuals. In view of this, it will be readily appreciated that in this matter of royal financial aid to students the inception of the Society of the King's Scholars in Cambridge represents the first establishment of a royal "colony" of clerks in an English university setting.³

¹ For examples of this see H. G. Richardson, "The Schools of Northampton in the Twelfth Century", *E.H.R.*, lxi (1941), 595 ff., at pp. 597, 603; cf. also the interesting article by F. Pegues, "Royal Support of Students in the Thirteenth Century", *Speculum*, xxxi (1956), 454 ff.

² Cf. the conclusions of Pegues, art. cited, p. 454: "The most significant money grants made by Henry III (from whose reign comes the bulk of the evidence on royal support of students in thirteenth-century England) to students were used as minor diplomatic instruments or as accessories in the creation of military alliances." It is similarly suggested below (cf. below pp. 56-58) that royal motives of expediency, though now of a purely insular and household character, lay behind the institution of the Society of the King's Scholars in Cambridge at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

³ Until the foundation of King's College, Cambridge, in 1441, the Society of the King's Scholars, which became the endowed College of the King's Hall in 1337, remained the only true royal establishment at either of the English Universities. The Oxford colleges, Oriel (1324) and Queen's (1341), cannot be reckoned royal

“The object of the foundation was to provide a home for students who entered the University with the object of preparing themselves for future work in church and state. . . .”¹ If this view were entirely correct, one might assume that Edward II’s motives were wholly identical with those of the English collegiate founders of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Undoubtedly, at this period there was a pressing need to provide accommodation and financial support for secular scholars capable of study beyond a first degree. This need was partly met by the foundation of a number of endowed colleges.² Oxford led the way with Merton’s foundation of 1264, which became the prototype of the English “graduate” college of the pre-Reformation era. It was followed by University College, c. 1280, and by Balliol in 1282.³ At Cambridge, the only thirteenth-century college, Peterhouse, was established by Hugh de Balsham, bishop of Ely, in 1284.⁴ Walter de Stapledon’s Oxford foundation, Exeter College, was the last collegiate institution to be erected before the settlement of the King’s Scholars at Cambridge.⁵

foundations in any technical sense. Oriel, founded by the chancery clerk Adam de Brome, was later re-established with the king as nominal founder. See H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden, Oxford, 1936), iii. 204-5. Queen’s was founded by Robert de Eglesfield, chaplain to Queen Philippa, consort of Edward III, and placed under the patronage of the queens of England (*ibid.* iii. 207).

¹ Rouse Ball, *op. cit.* p. 3.

² For the general features of medieval English colleges see H. E. Salter, *Medieval Oxford* (Oxford Hist. Soc., Oxford, 1936), pp. 95-102.

³ Although the scholars of John de Balliol were settled in Oxford before June 1266, the college dates as a legal corporation from the issue of the first statutes in 1282. On this point see Rashdall, *op. cit.*, ed. cit. iii. 180-1; cf. also H. W. C. Davis, *A History of Balliol College* (2nd ed. by R. H. C. Davis and R. Hunt, Oxford, 1963), pp. 8-9.

⁴ The existence of one college is not, of course, conclusive proof for the presence of a University; that there was a well-established University at Cambridge long before Peterhouse was founded is proved by the existence of early University statutes (*cf.* below, pp. 68-69), as well as by numerous royal writs and papal documents of the thirteenth century which mention a chancellor and a University of masters and scholars. Several of these writs are preserved in the Archives of the University of Cambridge. The earliest known recognition of Cambridge by the Holy See is contained in two papal indulgences of 1233. *Cf. Register, Gregory IX* (ed. L. Auvray, Paris, 1896), i. 779, nos. 1388, 1389; *Calendar of Papal Letters* (ed. W. H. Bliss, London, 1893), i. 135, 136; cf. also Rashdall, iii. 279.

⁵ Founded in, or soon after, 1314. See *ibid.* iii. 202.

Considerations of piety apart, these establishments were founded primarily to enable selected scholars with the bachelor's or master's degree to remain at the University to take the higher degrees in canon or civil law, or in theology.¹ But to try to fit the royal "colony" exclusively into this pattern of university development is to miss its real significance. As the background to the foundation has not hitherto been adequately examined the king's motives, consequently, have been considered only from an "academic" point of view; whereas the available evidence strongly suggests that in origin the institution of the King's Scholars was at least in part a product of the political and household manoeuvres of the reign of Edward II.

The key to the wider historical or "national" significance of the royal foundation lies in the character of its personnel. Without exception, the first detachment of the King's Scholars was composed of children from the Chapel Royal.² Throughout the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries a varying percentage of Scholars was drawn directly from this source or from the court circle.³ Even after direct recruitment from the Chapel had apparently ceased,⁴ the connection with the court continued⁵ and the College became to an ever-increasing extent a base for graduate fellows, especially for civil lawyers, who were frequently non-resident and were employed in various capacities in Church and State.⁶

As far as can be determined, the functions of the English Chapel Royal, in contrast to those of Continental Europe, especially those of Germany and Sicily, were wholly ecclesiastical and

¹ The exact provisions varied considerably in each case according to the interests or prejudices of the founder.

² Their names have not been recovered; but most of them probably recur in later lists found among accounts for their maintenance enrolled on the Pipe Roll. See Stamp, *op. cit.* pp. 82-83.

³ Detailed figures will be supplied in a forthcoming dissertation on the King's Hall and the King's Scholars.

⁴ No Scholar admitted to the College after the first quarter of the fifteenth century is specifically named as a boy or clerk of the Chapel Royal (Stamp, p. 135.)

⁵ Details to be supplied (see n. 3, p. 53). For the present, see the remarks of Rouse Ball, *The King's Scholars and King's Hall*, pp. 21-23.

⁶ *Ibid.*

liturgical in character.¹ Judging from the account of William Say, dean of the Chapel in the reign of Henry VI, it appears that the institution was geared solely to serving the religious needs of the king, queen and their immediate entourage.² There would, therefore, seem to be very good grounds for saying that in England the Chapel Royal did not constitute a special training ground for clerks destined for office in the Church or civil service. But the intimate connection of the Society of the King's Scholars and the later College, the King's Hall, with the Chapel and royal household, indicates that in the early years of the fourteenth century an attempt was made to extend the scope of its functions by developing them externally in an academic direction. Indeed, it is certain that initially the royal Society was nothing less than an extension or arm of the Chapel Royal set in the University of Cambridge; and that throughout the greater part of its history remained a kind of physical adjunct or supplement to the household and to the court. This being so, one can only conclude that the King's Scholars and the subsequent College together formed the first institutional link between the household and the English Universities. The value of such a connection from the Crown's point of view may be gauged from the salient fact that eleven English kings thought it worthwhile to maintain the Society out of royal revenues for over two centuries.³ It is thus clear that when the household was first extended outwards to embrace university society, the Cambridge "studium" alone was chosen for this new venture: Oxford was here completely by-passed and does not appear to have in any way participated in what is one of the most exciting academic developments of the fourteenth century.

Evidence for the ties that resulted between the Chapel Royal and the English Universities is to be found in the household ordinance known as the Black Book of the Household of Edward IV.⁴

¹ See W. Ullmann, ed., *Liber regie capelle* (Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. xcii, Cambridge, 1959), pp. 7-8.

² *Ibid.* p. 8.

³ The King's Hall was dissolved on 17 December 1546 when its buildings, site and property, along with those of Michaelhouse, were incorporated in Henry VIII's new royal foundation, Trinity College.

⁴ Concerning the date of the Black Book: "We can only be sure that the Black Book was composed some time during the decade 1467-77; but during that

In the section concerning the children of the Chapel, it is stated that if upon reaching the age of eighteen a youth cannot be given immediate preferment within the Chapel or elsewhere within the court, then, provided that he consents, he is to be sent "to a college of Oxenford or Cambridge, of the kinges fundacion, there to be in finding and study sufficiauntly tyll the king otherwise list to avaunce hym".¹ It is therefore clear that by the third quarter of the fifteenth century at the latest the link established between the Chapel and the English Universities had been written into the ordinances of the household.² And judging from this entry, it would appear that the connection initiated by the King's Scholars had now become only part of a wider and more comprehensive household policy which had broadened out to embrace all "royal" colleges at either of the two universities (i.e. at Cambridge, the King's Hall, King's College and Queens'; at Oxford, Oriel and Queen's, though these latter were not strictly speaking royal foundations). Here, however, it is essential to stress that the relationship between the King's Hall and the central government was substantially different from that of any other medieval college which may either technically or loosely be designated "royal" and which would presumably come within the terms of reference of the clause cited from the Black Book of Edward IV. For throughout its long history the King's Hall remained the intensely personal and flexible instrument of the king: successive English kings retained the patronage entirely in their own hands, every fellow being individually appointed by writ of privy seal and every warden being a crown appointee and responsible to the king alone.³ It is this interesting constitutional feature concerning the patronage of the College which decisively marks off the King's Hall from all other categories of "royal" English colleges. Although King's College, Cambridge, for

period some date during 1471 and 1472 seems most likely." (A. R. Myers, *The Household of Edward IV* (Manchester, 1959), p. 33.)

¹ The Black Book, chap. 59, ed. cit. p. 137.

² There is no trace of this connection in the *Liber regie capelle* which has been ascribed by its editor to some date before May 1449. See Ullmann, op. cit. pp. 10-11. Nor does it occur in any of the household ordinances hitherto published.

³ The constitutional features of the King's Hall will be discussed in a forthcoming dissertation.

example, was in every sense a true royal foundation, its subsequent position in relation to that of the University's first royal establishment has not formerly been sufficiently considered. Whereas the Crown exercised a complete physical control over the movement of the personnel of the King's Hall, Henry VI, on the other hand, after the foundation of his grand design, King's College, resigned control of the patronage into the hands of the provost and fellows.¹ And so, this second Cambridge royal foundation was from the start like almost any other English college, a sovereign, self-perpetuating society, run on democratic lines and functioning under only a very remote royal supervision. Consequently, as the links with the central administration were so tenuous even in the case of a true royal foundation such as King's, one can imagine that they would be even more so for those colleges such as Oriel and Queen's, Oxford, whose regality derived from the consideration that the Crown had intervened as second founder.² It would therefore seem justifiable to draw the conclusion that by virtue of its unique relationship to the household the King's Hall must have remained the real sheet anchor of the connection between the Universities and the court right throughout the medieval period.

But in order to grasp its full significance, the Cambridge Chapel settlement has to be seen in relation to the general curial policies of Edward II's reign, whose essence lay in the development of the potentialities latent in the royal household. The reforms of the period were due either to the effort of the Ordainers to enforce the Ordinances, or they resulted, ". . . from the attempts of the 'curiales' to entrench themselves more securely in the last strongholds of the household."³ At the core of the administrative system lay the king's household; Edward's strength derived from its adaptability. As the baronial opposition

¹ For the "democratic" arrangements for the election of the provost and fellows of King's see the statutes of King's College in *Camb. Docs.*, ii. at 504 ff. and 487 ff. For details of Henry VI's act of foundation and of the early organization of the College see J. Saltmarsh, "King's College", *Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*, iii (London, 1959), 376 ff.

² Cf. above, n. 3, pp. 51-52.

³ T. F. Tout, *The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History* (2nd ed. by Hilda Johnstone, Manchester, 1936), p. 143.

tried to "capture" the main government departments such as the exchequer, chancery and the privy seal, the king withdrew further into the safety of his household. There, a number of expedients were devised to free the monarchy from the baronial restraints of the Ordinances.¹ For example, revenues due to the exchequer were diverted to the chamber, which was subsequently developed as a central organ of finance.² Another device was the emergence of the secret seal as a counterweight to privy seal which, as least for part of the reign, was under baronial control.³ Considering the trend of curial policies in the second decade of the fourteenth century in relation to the household origins of the King's Scholars, it seems likely that the Cambridge Chapel settlement was conceived as another of these several expedients of the reign, designed to bolster the resources of the household: more specifically, that is to say that the scheme was almost certainly envisaged as a long term "investment" aimed at buttressing the waning power of the Crown, by increasing the number of educated clerks at its disposal. It undoubtedly came at a time when there was an ever growing demand for university trained graduates, especially civil and canon lawyers, to staff government departments⁴ and to fill ecclesiastical offices.⁵ And it evidently appears that this Cambridge foundation had, as one of its chief aims, the provision of a reservoir of educated personnel, from which the king could draw to meet his particular requirements.

¹ Of the general characteristics of the reforms of the period of the struggle for the Ordinances, Tout has written: ". . . these were, so far as conscious, more largely efforts to buttress the court against baronial attacks than honest attempts to improve the machinery of government for its own sake" (Tout, *op. cit.* p. 142).

² For the revival of the chamber under Edward II see *ibid.* pp. 151-8.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 153-5.

⁴ For this see Tout, "The English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century", *Collected Papers of T. F. Tout*, iii (Manchester, 1934), 191 ff., at pp. 200, 201.

⁵ Evidence for the increasing utilization of university talents by the Church at this time is seen from the character of Edward II's episcopate. Dr. Kathleen Edwards has supplied figures which reveal that the number of bishops under Edward who were university graduates was proportionally greater than the number who were "magistri" under Henry III. Especially noticeable is the greater number of Edward's bishops who incepted in the higher faculties of theology or law. See Kathleen Edwards, "Bishops and Learning in the Reign of Edward II," *Church Quarterly Review*, cxxxviii (1944), 57 ff., particularly pp. 58-61.

The timing of the royal foundation further supports the assumption that its origins are indeed closely linked with the policies of the "curiales". As mentioned above, the first detachment of Scholars from the Chapel Royal was settled in Cambridge at some date before 7 July 1317. But it was just then that a revival in the strength and fortunes of the household can be detected. In view of the court connections of the royal establishment, it is surely more than a mere coincidence that there is such a close chronological relationship between these two events. For the revival within the household began late in the year 1316. By this time, Edward had realized that the power of the earl of Lancaster in no wise corresponded to his high position as head of the council.¹ The growing independence of the king was asserted by the return to office of a number of the "curiales" who had previously been dismissed by the Ordainers.² Both Ingelard of Warley and John Ockham were made barons of the exchequer.³ In November 1316, the Ordinances were further flouted by the combination of the offices of keepership of the privy seal and controllership of the wardrobe under the curialist, Thomas Charlton; while on 27 May 1317, the king replaced Walter Norwich as treasurer by appointing to that position John Hotham, Gaveston's former confidant, and now bishop of Ely.⁴ Of this latter appointment, Tout has written: "It is significant of the reviving power of Edward that, while Norwich had been nominated treasurer 'by the King and Council', Hotham's appointment was 'by the King'."⁵

These facts establish beyond doubt that the settlement of the Chapel children in Cambridge came just at that time when the "curiales" were firmly re-entrenched in the principal offices of the household. As the Chapel was certainly one of the most intimate of all household departments, there is a strong likelihood that this academic undertaking was in some measure a consequence of the revival in the power of the king and his most trusted advisers.

¹ Tout, *Place of Edward II*, p. 97.

² Tout, loc. cit.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. Cf. also T. Madox, *The History and Antiquities of the Exchequer of England* (1st edn., London, 1711), p. 572.

But why should the king send his Scholars to Cambridge University, and not to Oxford, the more obvious choice? Was there at this juncture a positive pull or attraction towards Cambridge? Alternatively, had Edward II his reasons for avoiding the Oxford "studium?" It is common knowledge that in the early fourteenth century Oxford's European reputation was far greater than that of Cambridge; and the natural assumption would have been that the king would have sent his Scholars to be educated at Oxford. Both from the point of view of prestige and of scholastic achievement, Oxford would appear to have had far more to recommend it than had Cambridge. For this reason, therefore, it is all the more pertinent to ask ourselves why Edward II chose to single out and favour the Cambridge "studium" in 1317 by adorning it with England's first royal university foundation.

A consideration which might well have influenced the king's choice is associated with the person of the curialist, John Hotham. A Yorkshireman, Hotham had entered the king's service as a clerk.¹ He appears to have rapidly ingratiated himself both with the king and with his Gascon favourite, for in 1310 he became Gaveston's deputy as keeper of the forest north of Trent, as well as escheator north of Trent.² Consequently, it is not surprising that in the Articles of 1311 he was specifically named by the Ordainers as one of those royal officials who were to be immediately dismissed from the king's service.³ Despite the injunctions of the Ordainers, the king continued to show him favour by employing him in a diplomatic capacity in which he undertook several delicate missions, including two important ones to Ireland and to France.⁴ In July 1316, he was elected bishop of Ely and

¹ For details of Hotham's early life and career see the article by W. Hunt in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xxvii (London, 1891), 407-8; cf. also James Bentham, *The History and Antiquities of the Conventual and Cathedral Church of Ely* (2nd edn., Norwich, 1812), pp. 155-8.

² Tout, *Place of Edward II*, pp. 320, 322.

³ See J. C. Davies, *The Baronial Opposition to Edward II, its character and policy* (Cambridge, 1918), pp. 383-4. Hotham surrendered his offices of escheator on 2 February 1311 and of acting keeper on 2 December 1311. (Tout, *op. cit.* pp. 320, 322.) During Gaveston's exile, Hotham acted as his attorney (*Ibid.* p. 86, n. 2.)

⁴ *D.N.B.*, xxvii, 407; Bentham, *op. cit.* p. 155.

consecrated on 3 October of that year¹; and on 27 May 1317, after Hotham's return from Avignon, the king further disregarded the baronial opposition by appointing him to the office of treasurer.² As head of the exchequer by express command of the king, and at a time when the "curiales" had recaptured the main offices of the household, Hotham clearly had become the "de facto" chief minister of the Crown.³ And, moreover, his twin positions as treasurer and bishop of Ely would seem to have had a significant bearing upon the king's choice of Cambridge for his academic foundation.

The evidence at our disposal suggests that the scheme for the establishment of the Cambridge Society came to fruition shortly after Hotham's appointment as treasurer.⁴ Bearing in mind that from the outset the King's Scholars were maintained wholly by means of exchequer revenues one may assume that, by virtue of his office as head of the exchequer, Hotham must have been closely associated with the project. Indeed, one could go further and say with some confidence that as the scheme was in all probability conceived as one of the curialist expedients of the reign, it is very possible that the treasurer might even have been one of its prime movers. However this may be, there can be little doubt that in Hotham's position as bishop of Ely there lay a strong inducement for the king to establish his Society at that university which was situated within the diocese of his chief minister.

It has often been suggested that one of the causes which prompted Henry VI to choose Cambridge for the erection of King's College, was the alarming prevalence of Wyclifism at Oxford.⁵ It is, therefore, all the more interesting to

¹ *D.N.B.*, loc. cit. ; Bentham, loc. cit. ; cf. also F. M. Powicke and E. B. Fryde, *Handbook of British Chronology* (2nd edn., London, 1961), p. 223.

² Tout, op. cit. p. 298 ; Madox, op. cit. p. 572.

³ "The head of the exchequer, the treasurer, was a great officer of state, generally second only to the chancellor, though, if endowed with greater capacity or more fully possessed of his sovereign's confidence, he might easily become the 'de facto' chief minister. . ." (Tout, op. cit. p. 42). This appears to have been the case with Hotham.

⁴ Cf. above, p. 50, n. 2.

⁵ Cf. Rashdall, iii. 316 ; cf. also the statutes of King's College, *Finis et Conclusio omnium Statutorum in Camb. Docs.*, ii. 617 ff. at 623-4 : ". . . statuimus . . . quod quilibet scholaris in admissione sua . . . iuret quod non favebit opinionibus,

consider that there may have been a certain parallel reaction against Oxford in the case of the first royal foundation. In support of this contention, at least two reasons can be put forward as to why Edward II had cause to feel ill-disposed towards the Oxford "studium" in 1317.

The first of these concerns the king's Gascon favourite, Piers Gaveston. After Gaveston's capture by Pembroke and Warenne, Pembroke signed an agreement on 19 May 1312 assuring the prisoner's safety and promising that his fate would be settled in parliament.¹ In an unguarded moment, however, Gaveston was seized by the earl of Warwick and imprisoned in Warwick castle.² According to the *Vita Edwardi*, Pembroke immediately sought the aid of the earl of Gloucester; meeting with a refusal, he went to Oxford and there laid the case before the clerks of the University and the burgesses of the town.³ Pembroke appealed both for advice and help to recover the person of Gaveston. But the appeal failed to stir either the clerks or burgesses to any action which might save the royal favourite from his fate. In the words of the monk of Malmesbury: "Sed nec clerici nec burgenses rem ad se non pertinentem tractare vel attemptare curabant."⁴ As this episode was so closely bound up with the train of events which led to Gaveston's murder one can well imagine that the unresponsively neutral or even hostile attitude adopted by the Oxford clerks and burgesses would leave a most unfavourable and perhaps lasting impression upon the mind of the king.

During Edward II's reign relations between the king and the chancellor and masters of Oxford were undoubtedly strained over the controversial issue of what position the friars were entitled to occupy within the academic community. The king actively supported the Mendicants, several writs being addressed to the

damnatis erroribus aut heresibus Johannis Wycklyfe, Reginaldi Peacocke neque alicuius alterius heretici. . . ."

¹ See M. McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century, 1307-1399* (Oxford, 1959), p. 25.

² *Ibid.* p. 26.

³ *Ibid.* See *Vita Edwardi II monachi cujusdam Malmesberiensis*, in *Chronicles of the reign of Edward I and Edward II* (R. S., ed. W. Stubbs, 1882), ii. 178-9; cf. also the 2nd edn. (with translation), by N. Denholm-Young (Nelson's medieval texts, 1957), p. 26.

⁴ Malmesb., *Vita Edwardi*, ed. cit. p. 179; N. Denholm-Young, loc. cit.

chancellor on their behalf.¹ In addition, Edward sent a number of letters to the papal curia in furtherance of their claims²; while in 1318, the king, “. . . went so far as to order the chancellor to desist from exercising authority over the Friar Preachers since they were exempt from secular jurisdiction not only by reason of their Order, but by apostolic privilege”.³ At Cambridge, too, serious conflicts arose between the University authorities and the friars. A quarrel broke out in 1303; three statutes were passed which were harmful to the interests of the friars, who then appealed to the Pope.⁴ But a compromise settlement was reached at Bordeaux in 1306.⁵ And although the differences remained, the struggle did not revive in any serious form until the second half of the fourteenth century.⁶

It is thus clear that whereas the friar problem had reached a critical phase of development at Oxford during the reign of Edward II, at Cambridge in the same period the disputed issues had been temporarily shelved. And considering the king's deep attachment to the cause of the Mendicants, it is very likely that this difference in the relative positions of the friars at the English Universities at this time provides us with a further clue as to why royal patronage was then attracted to the Cambridge “studium”.

Edward II might conceivably have been further influenced in his choice of University by considerations of prestige. In the early fourteenth century there are signs of the emergence of what can be described as a more insular attitude towards the English “studia”.⁷ At this period, Oxford was a University of the first

¹ See Strickland Gibson, “The University of Oxford”, *Victoria County History of Oxford*, iii (ed. H. E. Salter and M. D. Lobel, London, 1954), 7.

² *Ibid.* The friars presented the case against the University to the papal curia in 1311.

³ *Ibid.* Edward's support for the friars was perhaps strengthened by feelings of gratitude towards the Oxford Dominicans, who sheltered the headless corpse of Gaveston in their convent for more than three years. The embalmed body was subsequently removed by the king and buried at King's Langley. See Malmesb., *Vita Edwardi*, ed. cit., pp. 180, 209; *Annales Londonienses*, in *Chron. Edw. I and II*, i. 207; cf. also Mckisack, op. cit. pp. 26-27, 47.

⁴ See J. P. C. Roach, “The University of Cambridge”, *Victoria County History of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*, iii (London, 1959), 153.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 154.

⁷ Dr. Kathleen Edwards has drawn attention to the prevalence of this attitude among the bishops of Edward II's reign. In their registers she has detected

rank, her scholars playing a leading part in the development of European thought and learning. Although Rashdall's stress on the insignificance of medieval Cambridge is now seen to be in need of a long overdue revision,¹ the fact remains that Cambridge was the smaller and less prominent of the English Universities.² In view of the efforts then being made by the king and his supporters to restore the fortunes of the monarchy, it may well have been that Edward's unmistakable intent to boost the reputation of the Cambridge "studium" derived to some extent from the conviction that this would likewise increase his own national prestige.³ Obviously, the establishment of a royal "colony" at Cambridge would be a decisive step in this direction.

It would, furthermore, appear that the attraction of royal patronage to Cambridge had a marked effect upon the way in which the "studium" developed in the first half of the fourteenth century. One would naturally expect that Edward's Chapel foundation would provide a royal lead or example; would set, so to speak, an academic fashion. And indeed, this seems to have been the case. For there is strong circumstantial evidence to support the inference that it was the introduction of this royal community into the University which was largely instrumental in attracting to Cambridge the interest and wealth of the more enlightened members of Edward's episcopate and official circle.

indications of the growth of a "spirit of nationalism" towards the English "studia", especially towards Oxford. See Edwards, art. cited, p. 75.

¹ Several eminent scholars, including Thomas of York, Duns Scotus, John Bromyard, Robert Holcot and Thomas Cobham, are now known to have studied or taught at Cambridge. See Rashdall, iii. 284, n. 2.

² Although the figures cannot be compiled with any great degree of accuracy, it has been roughly computed that before the middle of the fifteenth century Cambridge University, numerically speaking, was only about a third as large as the Oxford "studium". Cf. A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (3 vols., Oxford, 1957-9), i. xvi.

³ It was largely from considerations of national prestige that Edward II wrote to the Pope on 26 December 1317, requesting that the "ius ubique docendi," recently granted to the University of Paris, be formally conferred upon the University of Oxford. This letter is most conveniently printed by H. Denifle and A. Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris, 1891), ii, i. no. 756. The king's request was not granted. It has been suggested that one of the reasons for the Pope's refusal may have been connected with the current dispute between the University and the Dominicans. Cf. G. L. Haskins, "The University of Oxford and the ius ubique docendi," *E.H.R.*, lvi (1941), 281 ff., at p. 287.

This contention is based on the telling fact that all the most important benefactions of the early years of the century followed in quick succession from the establishment of the King's Scholars in Cambridge; and, moreover, that the benefactors themselves, both statesmen and ecclesiastics, were among the most trusted of Edward II's ministers.

Of the members of Edward's circle who were drawn, apparently by the royal example, to give of their wealth to Cambridge may be mentioned Hervey de Stanton, chancellor of the exchequer and founder of Michaelhouse¹; John Salmon, bishop of Norwich² and formerly prior of the cathedral monastery of Ely, named in the statutes of 1359 for Clare College as an early benefactor of University Hall³; Thomas Cobham, the learned bishop of Worcester, also cited as a benefactor of University Hall⁴; and John Hotham, bishop of Ely, recorded as a benefactor of Peterhouse.⁵ Mention must also be made of Roger de Northburgh, keeper of the privy seal from 1312 to 1316, treasurer of the wardrobe from 1316 to 1322,⁶ and bishop of Coventry and Lichfield between 1322 and 1359. The traditional claim that Northburgh was, in addition, a chancellor of Cambridge University, is now open to dispute.⁷ But his undoubted interest in the "studium" is known from the fact that in 1321 he moved the king to grant a licence to the chancellor and masters: this allowed them to acquire advowsons of churches to the annual value of forty pounds for the endowment of colleges to be founded for scholars in theology and logic.⁸

¹ With one short interval, Hervey de Stanton was chancellor of the exchequer from 22 June 1316 to 18 July 1326. See A. E. Stamp, *Michaelhouse* (privately printed, Cambridge, 1924), pp. 8-9.

² Salmon was chancellor from 26 January 1320 to 5 June 1323 (Tout, *Place of Edward II*, p. 290.) ³ Cf. *Camb. Docs.*, ii. 142. ⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ R. Parker, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Cambridge* (London, 1721?), p. 37. ⁶ Tout, *op. cit.* pp. 316, 317.

⁷ A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500*, p. 427 gives reasons for doubting the validity of this claim first put forward by T. Fuller in *The History of the University of Cambridge* (ed. M. Prickett and T. Wright, London and Cambridge, 1840), p. 36; this point which has also been raised by Dr. Kathleen Edwards is further discussed by A. C. Chibnall in *Richard de Badew and the University of Cambridge (1315-40)* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 8-10.

⁸ It is probable that, as archdeacon of Richmond, he himself had contemplated such a foundation. See Rashdall, iii. 303, n. 3.

If a wider view is taken of this subject, it is indeed arguable that Cambridge owes a greater debt to the royal establishment as a more immediate and therefore actual stimulus to its early collegiate expansion than to Peterhouse, the first of its colleges. For in the thirty years following the foundation of Peterhouse in 1284, no other college was erected and no marked interest was seemingly taken in the "studium"; whereas at Oxford in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, three colleges¹ were founded which, with Merton, brought the number up to four. It is plainly observable, however, that after the settlement of the King's Scholars in Cambridge, the pattern of collegiate expansion at both Universities had radically altered. At Oxford, only two colleges, Oriel in 1324 and Queen's in 1341, were founded in the remainder of the first half of the fourteenth century. At Cambridge, on the other hand, no fewer than seven colleges were established in the period between 1317 and 1352.²

These facts would seem to point to the conclusion that the coming of royal patronage to Cambridge had caused a re-orientation in the attitude towards the English Universities of those sections of society which produced the college founders and benefactors of the medieval period. Whereas Oxford had hitherto drawn off much of the surplus wealth available for university learning, now, affluent high-ranking members of the ministerial class such as Hervey de Stanton, ecclesiastics like bishop Bateman,³ and rich lay patrons, of whom Lady Clare and the countess of Pembroke are good examples, had clearly come to regard Cambridge as a sound "investment" for the future. And it would surely be reasonable to infer that one of the chief inspirations behind this new-found confidence in Cambridge University, expressed in the sudden flow of interest and material resources towards the "studium", was the encouraging presence there of Edward's royal foundation.

¹ University College (c. 1280); Balliol (1282); and Exeter (1314-16).

² Michaelhouse (1324); University or Clare Hall (1326); the King's Hall (1337); Pembroke Hall (1347); Gonville Hall (1349); Trinity Hall (1350); and Corpus Christi (for long more usually styled S. Benet's College) (1352).

³ Bishop of Norwich and founder of Trinity Hall.

Further considerations appear to be called for. Should Edward II's petition to the Pope of 18 March 1317 be regarded as merely coincidental with the establishment of his Cambridge Society, or is there a causal connection between the two events? As is known, this was the petition which led to the apostolic award of 1318, whose significance for the University will be discussed below. One of the king's motives, and perhaps the main motive, behind the petition can be readily assessed. It is only natural that Edward should have been concerned about the status of the University to which he had sent his Scholars. To ensure that the standing of that University was consistent with the dignity of his royal foundation, it can well be imagined that the king was particularly anxious to have the status of Cambridge as a "studium generale" undisputedly admitted in a formal papal document.¹ If, on the other hand, the king had sent his Chapel Scholars to be educated at Oxford, it is equally likely that this would have prompted him to seek a similar mark of papal favour for that University as well. The probable connection between the royal settlement and the petition will be more apparent when a number of relevant factors are considered.

¹ In this connection, it should perhaps be pointed out that the settlement of the King's Scholars in Cambridge and Edward's petition to Pope John XXII came just at that time when the earliest Oxford petitions for benefices submitted to the papal curia can be traced. These concern the numerous provisions for fellows of Merton College for 1317 (Cf. Rashdall, i. 555n; cf. also Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University Of Oxford*, i. xxxvi). As far as can be determined, the earliest traceable list of Cambridge petitioners is one for 1331, though, of course, earlier ones may have existed (Cf. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500*, p. xxiv). Although there is, as yet, no concrete evidence to substantiate the point, it is possible that an additional motive for seeking that the status of the Cambridge "studium" be formally confirmed by the Pope was that such an act would impart greater weight to Cambridge University "rotuli" of petitions for benefices to be sent to the curia shortly afterwards; in particular, it might help to ensure that petitions from Cambridge would receive an attention equal to that then given to those from Oxford. On this subject of University rolls of petitions see in addition to the references cited E. F. Jacob, "Petitions for Benefices from English Universities during the Great Schism", *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 4th ser., xxvii (1945), 41-59; "English University Clerks in the Later Middle Ages: the Problem of Maintenance", *B.J.R.L.*, xxix (1945-46), 304-25; "On the Promotion of English University Clerks during the later Middle Ages", *Journal Eccles. Hist.*, i (1950), 172-86; cf. more recently D. E. R. Watt, "University Clerks and Rolls of Petitions for Benefices", *Speculum*, xxxiv (1959), 213-29.

At the beginning of his reign, on 9 June 1309, Edward confirmed the existing privileges of the University.¹ In 1313, the old borough charters were likewise confirmed.² Before this date, there is no indication of any royal policy designed to raise the standing of the University, either from a "national" point of view or at the expense of the mayor and burgesses of Cambridge. In February 1317, however, the University privileges were again confirmed and new ones granted which led to strained relations between the burgesses and the University.³ On 18 March 1317, the king addressed letters to Pope John XXII, requesting him to strengthen and "perpetuate" the University, and to confirm and augment its privileges.⁴ It will be recalled that the King's Scholars were settled in Cambridge at some date before 7 July.⁵ As it was necessary to find suitable accommodation and generally to prepare for their reception, the decision to send the Chapel children to Cambridge must have been taken several weeks, or even months, before the first settlement.⁶ We can be reasonably assured therefore that the project concerning the King's Scholars and Edward's petition to Pope John were both conceived about the same point in time in the early part of 1317; and in view of what has previously been said with reference to the king's motives, there is a strong probability that this chronological relationship was also causal.

It is, moreover, relevant to note that Edward's petition was timed to coincide with a royal mission to Avignon. The envoys were the earl of Pembroke, Lord Badlesmere, Hotham, bishop of Ely, and Salmon, bishop of Norwich.⁷ They set out for Avignon

¹ *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (London, 1908), iii. 129, 226.

² *Ibid.* p. 226.

³ The charter is preserved in Cambridge University Archives, Cabinet, no. 19. For the possible rôle of Robert de Baldock in the chain of events which culminated in the issue of this charter of privileges see Chibnall, *op. cit.* pp. 3-4, 25-26.

⁴ This petition is printed in Rymer, *Foedera* (ed. A. Clarke, London, 1818), II, i. 357; cf. also *Camb. Docs.*, i. 6. The document will be more extensively quoted below.

⁵ Cf. above, p. 50, n. 2.

⁶ The King's Scholars were at first lodged in rented premises as a charge on the exchequer, and remained so until Edward III purchased for them a house in 1336 from Robert de Croyland, rector of Oundle, which he assigned to the Society as part of the endowment of the King's Hall, the royal College founded on the basis of the existing Society in October 1337.

⁷ See Tout, *Place of Edward II*, p. 101.

in December 1316 and started their return journey to England in April 1317.¹ Their general object was to win the support of the new Pope for the English king; their particular aims, to gain for Edward permission to tax the English clergy, as well as papal help against the Scots.² It is known, however, that the ambassadors' brief extended to other matters of a more secret nature³; and it is almost certain that the mission would give Hotham, and perhaps Salmon, the opportunity to open discussions on the Cambridge "studium" preparatory to the arrival of the king's petition.⁴

As a direct consequence of this petition, Cambridge received the apostolic award of John XXII in June 1318.⁵ It has long since been evident that Denifle's interpretation of this document is wholly unacceptable. He regarded it as a foundation-bull which, in effect, created the "studium" at Cambridge.⁶ But this is patently inaccurate. An examination of the "studium" in the thirteenth century reveals that it already possessed the main features which characterized the "studium generale" (i.e. students from distant regions, a plurality of masters, and teaching in at least one of the higher faculties, theology, law, or medicine.)⁷ If more specific evidence is required, it can be pointed out that a very high degree of university organization and advanced state of

¹ See Tout, *Place of Edward II*, p. 101.

² Ibid. Cf. also J. C. Davies, *op. cit.* p. 429.

³ Hotham and Salmon, for example, presented a letter to the Pope concerning the king's request for permission to receive the miraculous oil said to have been given to Thomas Becket by the Virgin Mary. See the letter of John XXII to Edward II in *English Coronation Records* (ed. L. G. Wickham Legg, Westminster, 1901), pp. 69-76 (with translation); cf. also W. Ullmann, "Thomas Becket's Miraculous Oil", *J. T. S.*, viii (1957), 129 ff., especially at p. 129.

⁴ I have been unable to discover the exact date in April on which the ambassadors left the papal curia to return home. But as they certainly did not leave for England until the month of April, and considering that the king's letter is dated 18 March, it is probable that they were still at Avignon when the royal petition arrived.

⁵ An edited text of the papal letter is given at the end of this paper.

⁶ See H. Denifle, *Die Entstehung der Universitäten des Mittelalters bis 1400* (Berlin, 1885), i. especially pp. 352-3, 375-6; cf. also Rashdall, iii. 283.

⁷ For the general characteristics of European "studia generalia," see Rashdall, i. 7; the earlier and divergent views of P. H. Denifle, C. Meiners, F. C. von Savigny, A. Pertile, F. Schupfer and G. Kaufmann on the essential features of "studia generalia" are conveniently summarized by G. Ermini, "Concetto di Studium Generale," *Archivio Giuridico*, cxxvii (1942), 3 ff. at pp. 3-7.

learning is presupposed in the statute of 17 March 1275.¹ But this topic need not be further examined as it has been widely recognized that long before 1318 Cambridge had attained the status of at least “studium generale respectu regni”.²

The most recent commentators upon the letter of Pope John XXII have considered it to be a formal papal recognition, which officially conferred the status of “studium generale”, and, consequently, the “ius ubique docendi”, upon the University of Cambridge.³ In the light of a critical re-appraisal of this document, however, there would now seem to be a good case for regarding the papal letter as a confirmation which merely strengthened an already existing “studium generale” without in any way improving upon its status.

The letter of Pope John XXII was still in the possession of the University in 1420. In that year, it was listed in the detailed inventory of the contents of the Chest compiled by Master William Rysley.⁴ Unfortunately, its subsequent history is unknown as it has since disappeared. The text of the letter, given at the end of this paper, has been taken from a photostatic copy of the entry in the Vatican Register of John XXII, vol. lxxviii, fo. 66, no. 1230. It was found that this corresponded almost exactly with the transcript of the letter contained in the document entitled, “Processus Barnwellensis ex mandato Martini Papae V, cum bullis Johannis XXII et Bonifacii IX”. This is a parchment document, dated 10 October 1430, and is preserved in Cambridge University Archives.⁵ A number of printed editions of the text have also appeared.⁶ Among these there are several

¹ The significance of this statute for the early history of the University is discussed by W. Ullmann in *The Historical Journal*, i (1958), 176 ff., especially at p. 180.

² See Rashdall, iii. 284.

³ Cf., e.g. Roach, “The University of Cambridge”, op. cit. p. 154; also Chibnall, op. cit. p. 4.

⁴ Cf. *Registrum Librorum*, fo. 10^v (preserved in Cambridge University Archives). For a description of Rysley’s inventory see H. E. Peek and C. P. Hall, *The Archives of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 4-6.

⁵ Cambridge University Archives, Cabinet, no. 108.

⁶ Printed editions of the text are given by Parker, op. cit. pp. 22-23; Fuller, op. cit. pp. 80-81; and by G. Dyer, *The Privileges of the University of Cambridge; together with Additional Observations on its History, Antiquities, Literature, and Biography* (London, 1824), i. 60-61. A translation, based on Fuller’s text, is

textual differences in points of detail ; but in one important, and, as will be seen, misleading respect, they are all at variance with the copies of the letter in the Vatican Register and in the “ Processus Barnwellensis ”.

Generally speaking, it may be said that papal letters or formal bulls for the erection of European “ studia generalia ” fall into one of at least four categories. They may erect a new “ studium generale”, where none has existed before¹; they may found a “ studium ” on the basis of an older one which has since declined, or even disappeared²; they may seem to erect a new “ studium ”, without reference to a former one, though it is known that an existing “ studium ” was flourishing at the time of the papal letter³; or lastly, the existence of a “ studium generale ” is admitted in the preamble of the document which then, on request of the ruler to strengthen it, proceeds to confirm the institution.⁴ And it is suggested that both structurally and in its signification the Cambridge award closely conforms to the fourth of these categories of papal documents.

Edward II’s petition to Pope John XXII is very illuminating as it indicates what the substance of the award is expected to be. It begins by stressing the antiquity of the Cambridge “ studium ”: and it continues by asserting that such a great University deserves to be raised in the public estimation.⁵ According to the king, therefore, the paramount need of the University is that it be

printed by James Heywood (ed.), *Collection of Statutes for the University and the Colleges of Cambridge* (London, 1840), p. 45.

¹ For example, see the foundation-bull for Prague (1347-48) printed in *Monumenta Historica Universitatis Praguensis* (ed. Dittrich and Spirk, Prague, 1834), ii. 219-22 ; cf. also Rashdall, ii. 215.

² See, e.g. the foundation-bull for Perpignon (1379) printed by M. Fournier, *Les Statuts et Privilèges des Universités Françaises depuis leur fondation jusqu’en 1789* (Paris, 1891), ii. no. 1438 in conjunction with the earlier history of the “ studium ” given by Rashdall, ii. 96-97.

³ For example, see the bull of Nicholas IV for Montpellier (1289) in Fournier, *op. cit.* ii. no. 903 together with the past history of the University outlined in Rashdall, ii. 119 ff., especially at p. 130.

⁴ See, e.g. the bull of Alexander IV for Salamanca (1255) in *Archiv für Literatur-und Kirchengeschichte* (ed. H. Denifle and F. Ehrle, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1889), v. 168-9 ; cf. also the remarks in Rashdall, ii. 77.

⁵ “. . . tanta universitas memorata majori mereretur attolli preconio. . .” (Rymer, *op. cit.*, ed. cit. p. 357).

strengthened and further “ propped up ” by the Holy See : “ Cum igitur universitas predicta, cuius statum prosperari cupimus et firmari, sacrosancte sedis apostolice gratiosa munificentia muniri iam indigeat et fulciri . . . supplicamus . . . ”¹ Towards this end, the Pope is then petitioned to “ perpetuate ” the existing University,² to confirm all its privileges, and, if it pleases him, to grant new ones. The essence of this petition, without the augmentation clause, is repeated in the papal letter of 1318.

It is beyond doubt that the whole tenor of Edward’s supplication is directed towards obtaining a strengthening or confirmation, by a mark of papal favour, of an old-established “ studium ” with its own organization and code of privileges. There is every justification for saying that if the king had, in fact, petitioned that Cambridge be formally recognized by the Pope as a “ studium generale ”, this would almost certainly have been specifically stated ; but there is no reference to this, nor to the “ ius ubique docendi ” in the king’s letter : while, at a later stage, it will be seen that the clause, “ apud Cantebrigiam . . . desiderat vigere studium generale . . . ”, reported in the papal letter as part of Edward’s petition (though it does not occur in this same form in the actual petition) cannot be interpreted as a request that a “ studium generale ” be established ; but, on the contrary, must be taken to mean that Edward desired that the existing one should flourish and prosper by virtue of papal support.

The first essential feature of the fourth category of papal documents listed above is that at some point in the letter or bull before the enactment clause is reached, the institution is expressly admitted to have been a “ studium generale ”. For example, when Pope Alexander IV confirmed the “ studium ” at Salamanca in 1255,³ it was recognized in the preamble of the bull that the institution had been a “ studium generale ” ever since its first foundation.⁴ And similarly, in the case of Cambridge, it is clear that the address of the papal letter of 1318 contains an unequivocal admission on the part of the Pope that the University had, by this date,

¹ Rymer, loc. cit.

² “. . . dictam universitatem perpetuare. . .”. (Ibid).

³ Cf. *Archiv für Literatur-und Kirchengeschichte*, loc. cit.

⁴ “. . . apud Salamantinam . . . generale studium statuisti, . . .” (Ibid).

already acquired the status of "studium generale". But in this highly important matter of the exact form of the address all the printed texts differ markedly from the original wording. Without exception, they give as the address of the letter: "dilectis filiis Universitatis Cantebrie Eliensis diocesis salutem. . .". According to the entry in the Vatican Register, however, as well as to the copy of John's letter in the "Processus Barnwellensis", the correct wording is: ". . . dilectis filiis *Universitatis Magistrorum et Scolarum studii generalis Cantebrie Eliensis diocesis salutem. . .*"¹

There can be no legitimate doubt that this is an explicit recognition of Cambridge as an already existing and properly constituted "studium generale". As the term occurs in a fourteenth-century papal letter, it is certain that it is used in the technical and precise sense implying the "ius ubique docendi" which the concept of "studium generale" had then acquired.² There is, moreover, no reasonable justification for considering the address to be a slip on the part of the papal chancery. On the contrary, even if there were no further evidence to substantiate the conclusion, the occurrence of this address in such an important University document lends powerful support to the view that long before 1318 Cambridge had, in actual fact, been fully recognized as a "studium generale".

After the address, the king's petition is next related. It is stated that as he desires that the "studium generale" at Cambridge should flourish and be well frequented by masters and students, he has requested that the existing "studium" be strengthened by papal authority. At this point, it is instructive to compare the wording of the Cambridge letter with the similar way in which the Salamancan petition is reported (see page 73). It will be observed that there is no essential difference in kind between these two petitions. In each case, the king has asked that the "studium" be merely strengthened by papal confirmation, without seeking that its status be in any way altered or improved. And it would appear that this form of petition constitutes the second characteristic feature of our fourth category of papal documents.

¹ See text at end of paper.

² Cf. Rashdall, i. 10.

Salamanca :

“. . . et ut generale studium (i.e. the “studium generale” already recognized) doctoribus et docendis in posterum frequentetur, humiliter postulasti a nobis apostolico id munimine roborari.”¹

Cambridge :

“. . . apud Cantebrigiam desiderat vigere studium generale (i.e. the “studium generale” already expressly recognized in the address) et quod a doctoribus et docendis in posterum frequentetur, humiliter postulavit a nobis ut studium ab olim ordinatum et privilegia . . . concessa, apostolico curaremus munimine roborari.”²

Whereas in the case of Salamanca the simple form, “confirmamus”, is used to confirm the institution, the Cambridge letter carries the formal enactment: “. . . ut in predicto loco . . . sit de cetero studium generale . . . vigeat perpetuis futuris temporibus in qualibet facultate.” This, however, is a set formula, common to several kinds of papal bulls of erection. Before it can be properly interpreted in any one case, the historical circumstances governing the issue of the bull or letter have to be carefully considered. Take just one example: this form of enactment occurs in the bull of Nicholas IV for the erection of a “studium generale” at Montpellier in 1289.³ The erection is treated as a new foundation; there is no mention of an existing “studium” in the preamble of the document; and yet, “there can be no doubt that the ‘studium’ had long been treated as ‘general’ both by custom and by express apostolic recognition”.⁴ What at first sight would seem to an ordinary foundation-bull, on further enquiry, turns out to be a formal papal recognition.

When examining documents of this kind, therefore, it is necessary to bear in mind that in isolation the enactment clause is sometimes misleading as to their essential character. In several instances, it is only when the clause is considered in relation to the historical background of the bull, or to a petition, or to some other feature of the bull itself, that it can be accurately interpreted. And this is the case with the Cambridge letter. When the enactment clause is set in the context of all that is known of the development and organization of the “studium” before 1318, and is seen in relation to the petition of Edward II, and to the form

¹ *Archiv für Literatur—und Kirchengeschichte*, v. 169.

² See text.

³ Cf. Fournier, *op. cit.* ii. no. 903.

⁴ See Rashdall, ii. 130.

of address in the letter, there can be little doubt that the clause is merely confirmatory in character.

A further piece of evidence in support of our conclusion is the entry for this document in the inventory of William Rysley. There, it is catalogued: "Item, nova *confirmatio* universitatis per Johannem XXII."¹ Although the inventory was compiled c. 1420, a hundred years after the letter was first issued, it remains an illuminating fragment of university comment upon the real significance of the papal award.

As it would now appear that the letter of John XXII was nothing more than a papal confirmation, it will be evident that this has important implications for the history of the medieval University. For it clearly means that at no time did the Pope presume to confer, even officially, the status of "studium generale" upon the University of Cambridge; but only to strengthen it by apostolic confirmation. From this, it inevitably follows that throughout at least part of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries Cambridge had already been recognized as a "studium generale" in the widest sense of the term and not merely "respectu regni". As it had not been recognized as "general" by papal authority, it must have been treated as "general" by custom. And so, even if Cambridge did not then possess a European reputation as great as that of her more prominent counterpart, the evidence leads to the conclusion that in this period she nevertheless enjoyed a status in every way equal to that of Oxford.² Indeed, there is a strong case for ranging the Cambridge "studium" with all those older "studia" such as Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Padua and Orleans, which had attained positions as "studia generalia" by custom ("ex consuetudine"),

¹ Cf. *Registrum Librorum*, fo. 10^v.

² It is perhaps well to point out that this conclusion concerning the equality of Cambridge with Oxford University is confined solely to the matter of the *status* of the "studium" in the years before and in 1318. It is not in any way suggested that in the same period Cambridge enjoyed an equality of *privilege* with Oxford. On the contrary, it is undeniable that in terms of concrete privileges Cambridge lagged behind the Oxford "studium" until the latter part of the fourteenth century; while in the case of the privilege of freedom from ecclesiastical authority, it was not until the Barnwell Process of 1430 that Cambridge finally and incontrovertibly obtained a complete papal exemption from the episcopal and archiepiscopal jurisdictions of Ely and Canterbury.

and not by formal papal enactment.¹ And to complete this picture of the standing of medieval Cambridge, it would appear that by the beginning of the fifteenth century the University had now also acquired a European renown, as well as a status, at least equal to that of the Oxford "studium". Adequate proof for this contention can be deduced from the revealing fact that at the conclusion of the Council of Constance in 1417, the cardinals sent a special letter to the University to inform it of their choice of a new pontiff. As far as is known, there is no corresponding announcement to the University of Oxford.²

The direction of recent research has been to revise and largely to reject the traditional image of Cambridge University in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Rashdall's stress on the inability of Cambridge to attract European scholars of the highest academic repute has now been considerably modified. And as the image has been at least partially corrected in the sphere of scholastic achievement, so there is need for a reassessment of the status of the University during the first century of its existence. In the light of a critical re-examination of the letter of Pope John XXII there is persuasive evidence for asserting that this document is far less of a landmark in Cambridge history than has hitherto been supposed. Since it now appears that the letter is wholly confirmatory in character, there is every justification for contending that not even in an official sense did Cambridge owe its

¹ Although at a later stage of development all of these Universities, except Oxford, received varying degrees of papal recognition for their positions as "studia generalia". In 1291-2 two bulls were issued by Pope Nicholas IV which formally conferred the "ius ubique docendi" upon the old-established Universities of Paris and Bologna. The bull for Paris is printed in C. E. Bulaeus, *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*, iii (Paris, 1666), 449-50; for Bologna, in M. Sarti, *De Claris Archigymnasii Bononiensis Professoribus a saeculo xi usque ad saeculum xiv* (Bologna, 1769-72), I, i. 59. In 1306, by a bull of Clement V, Orleans, which had been recognized as a "studium generale" before the mid-thirteenth century (i.e. "ex consuetudine"; cf. Rashdall, ii. 143), was granted all the privileges of the "studium generale" of Toulouse. The bull is printed by Fournier, i, no. 19. And in the case of Padua, the University acquired a confirmation of all its privileges as a "studium generale" by a bull of Clement VI in 1346. For this bull, see Antonio Riccobonus, *De Gymnasio Patavino* (Padua, 1722), fos. 4, 5.

² For a detailed analysis of this whole subject see W. Ullmann, "The University of Cambridge and the Great Schism", *J.T.S.*, ix (1958), 53 ff., at pp. 65 ff., with edition of text of the cardinals' letter, pp. 75 ff.

position as a "studium generale" to a formal act of papal erection. In reviewing the history of the English Universities in the period before 1318, therefore, we are led to affirm that by right Cambridge ought to be placed on a proper basis of equality of status with Oxford, as well as with those other European "studia" of similar rank.

In the course of this discussion it has, furthermore, been submitted that the significance of the first attraction of royal patronage to Cambridge has not been sufficiently appreciated. The establishment of an arm of the Chapel Royal in Cambridge had the effect of forging the initial institutional link between the court and the English Universities, a connection which, inaugurating a new royal policy, was subsequently broadened and inserted in the written ordinances of the household. There are, moreover, substantial grounds for regarding the Chapel settlement as being in some measure conceived as one of the several curial expedients of the reign, designed to buttress the power of the monarchy. And when to the household origins of the royal foundation are added the probable motives for the king's choice of Cambridge for his Scholars, it certainly seems that the fortunes of the University were more closely interwoven with the political tensions and personalities of the reign than has perhaps been formerly realized. In addition, an examination of the events leading to the apostolic letter of John XXII indicates a causal connection between the Chapel settlement and Edward II's petition to the Pope, of which the outcome was the award of 1318. And finally, there remains the consideration that in all probability the University derived greater benefit from the royal institution as a more real and immediate spur to its collegiate expansion than from Peterhouse, the solitary, episcopal foundation of the thirteenth century.

APPENDIX

The text of the Papal Letter printed below has been derived from a photostatic copy of the entry in the Vatican Register of John XXII, vol. lxxviii, fo. 66, no. 1230. This corresponds almost exactly with the more accessible copy of the Letter contained in the parchment document "Processus Barnwellensis" bearing the date of 10 October 1430 and now preserved in Cambridge University Archives,

Cabinet, no. 108. The entry in the Papal Register has here been compared with the printed editions of the text given by T. Fuller in *The History of the University of Cambridge* (ed. M. Prickett and T. Wright, London and Cambridge, 1840), pp. 80-81; and by G. Dyer in *The Privileges of the University of Cambridge* (London, 1824), i. 60-61. Capitals are used only where they occur in the Vatican Register: modern punctuation has been added according to the sense.

The Apostolic Letter of John XXII of 9 June 1318 addressed to the University of Masters and Scholars of the Studium Generale of Cambridge.

Johannes¹ Episcopus, servus servorum dei, dilectis filiis Universitatis² Magistrorum et Sclarium studii generalis² Cantebrigie, Eliensis diocesis, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.

Inter singula, que grata nos³ oblectatione letificant, grandi cor⁴ nostrum reficitur⁵ gaudio et letitia exultat optata,⁶ cum eos qui celesti sunt providentia predicti, ad Populorum Regimen et Regnorum ad communem subiectorum suorum profectum intentos aspiciamus, ipsosque ad publice utilitatis bonum sollicitos intuemur. Sane Carissimus in Christo filius noster Eduardus, Anglie Rex illustris,⁷ prudenter attendens, quod multitudo sapientium sanitas⁸ est Regnorum, quodque non minus prudentium consilio quam fortium strenuitate virorum regnantium⁹ et Regnorum moderamina disponuntur,¹⁰ apud Cantebrigiam, Eliensis diocesis locum, in Regno suo multis commoditatibus predictum et insignem, desiderat vigere studium generale, et quod a doctoribus et docendis in posterum frequentetur, humiliter postulavit a nobis ut studium ab olim inibi¹¹ ordinatum et privilegia a Romanis Pontificibus predecessoribus nostris vel Regibus Anglie,¹² qui fuerunt¹³ pro tempore, eidem concessa, apostolico curarem¹⁴ munimine roborari.¹⁵ Nos igitur sue intentionis propositum dignis in domino laudibus commendantes, eiusque supplicationibus inclinati, apostolica auctoritate statuimus ut in predicto loco Cantebrigie sit de cetero studium generale,¹⁶ illudque ibidem vigeat perpetuis futuris temporibus in qualibet facultate,¹⁶ volentes auctoritate predicta et etiam decernentes quod collegium Magistrorum et Sclarium eiusdem studii Universitas sit censenda, et omnibus iuribus gaudeat, quibus gaudere potest et debet¹⁷ quelibet Universitas¹⁷ legitime ordinata. Ceterum, omnia privilegia et indulta¹⁸ nobis et¹⁸ predicto studio rationabiliter a Pontificibus et Regibus predictis concessa, auctoritate predicta confirmamus¹⁹ et presentis scripti Patrocinio communimus.¹⁹ Nulli igitur²⁰ omnino homini²¹ liceat hanc paginam nostri

¹ Fuller: 'Joannes'.

³ Dyer: 'nobis'.

⁵ Dyer: 'reficimur'.

⁷ Fuller om. 'illustris'.

⁹ Fuller and Dyer: 'regentium'.

¹¹ Fuller: 'ibi'.

¹³ Fuller: 'fuerint'.

¹⁵ Fuller and Dyer: 'roborare'.

¹⁷⁻¹⁷ Fuller and Dyer: 'Universitas quaecunque'.

¹⁸⁻¹⁸ Fuller and Dyer: om.

²⁰ Dyer: 'ergo'.

²⁻² Fuller and Dyer om.

⁴ Dyer om. 'cor'.

⁶ Fuller: 'exoptata'.

⁸ Fuller and Dyer: 'salus'.

¹⁰ Fuller: 'disponantur'.

¹² Fuller om. 'Anglie'.

¹⁴ Fuller: 'curemus'.

¹⁶⁻¹⁶ Fuller: om.

¹⁹⁻¹⁹ Fuller and Dyer: om.

²¹ Fuller: om.

statuti, voluntatis, constitutionis et confirmationis infringere, vel in ausu temerario contraire. Si quis autem hoc attemptare presumpserit, indignationem omnipotentis dei et Beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum se noverit incursum.¹

Dat. Avinione v id. junii ² Pontificatus nostri anno secundo.

¹ Dyer: 'incursisse'.

² Fuller: V Idus Julii; Dyer: VI Idus Julii. The correct date, however, would appear to be V Id. June (i.e. 9 June 1318), as this is the date given in the Vatican Register and also in the "Processus Barnwellensis".