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0521022487 - The Church and Politics in Fourteenth-Century England: The
Career of Adam Orleton c. 1275-1345

Roy Martin Haines

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*Professor of Medieval History in the
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THE CHURCH AND POLITICS IN
FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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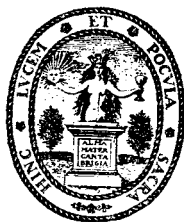
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TO
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PREFACE

It was while I was working on a D.Phil. thesis in the late 1950s that Adam Orleton first came to my notice as one of the Worcester bishops. At the time I found no reason to dissent from the opinion commonly held of him – that of Stubbs and Tout – which has been generally adopted with scarcely a reservation. On a number of occasions I found myself returning to various stages of Orleton's career; editing his Worcester register, examining his tenure of the great see of Winchester, transcribing the 'defence brief' directed against his accusers of 1324, and reading papers about him in places as far apart as Durham and Kalamazoo. It soon became clear that the evidence used to convict him of moral turpitude – and worse – was in need of re-examination. Something of the kind was attempted by Canon Bannister, but in his anxiety to rehabilitate Orleton he adopted a number of Geoffrey le Baker's erroneous assertions and made of his 'hero' a political schemer in the Mortimer interest; in fact, for Bannister, the Mortimer connection provided the motivation for Orleton's adult life. Since the publication of Bannister's introduction to Orleton's Hereford register the reign of Edward II has been the subject of meticulous study and reinterpretation by scholars, notably T. F. Tout, J. Conway Davies and Bertie Wilkinson, and, more recently, J. R. S. Phillips and J. R. Maddicott. None of this work has had the least impact on Orleton's reputation, but it has done much to illuminate virtually every aspect of the reign and hence the context into which this biography – if biography it is – can be fitted.

Orleton's career falls naturally into three compartments: his diplomatic missions, his activity as ruler of three English sees, and his involvement in politics at the national level. With respect to the first I have been guided in my interpretation by the published works of such scholars as D. Queller, H. S. Lucas, G. P. Cuttino and P. Chaplais, who have elucidated the intricacies of diplomatic

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process and protocol as well as the role of the negotiators concerned. My debt to these men and to those who have written about the political aspects of the reigns of Edward II and Edward III is amply demonstrated in the footnotes and bibliography. I have, of course, been at pains to relate their findings to Orleton's particular circumstances and have gone back to the manuscripts wherever he has been involved.

My own particular interests have been in ecclesiastical history – especially that of the English episcopate. None the less, I have tried to avoid over-emphasising the work of Orleton as diocesan, although it is copiously documented by his three registers and other subsidiary material. I hope, too, that I have avoided the assumption that competent administration necessarily stems from moral principle.

Over thirty years ago Miss Kathleen Edwards wrote a stimulating article on the political importance of the bishops during Edward II's reign. By and large her conclusion was that (following the death of Archbishop Winchelsey) the chroniclers rightly found the bishops guilty of a combination of futility and self-centredness. Nowadays Edward's foibles and eccentricities may be better understood, so too his unsuitability for kingship and the oppressive nature of the last few years of his reign. Against this background it is possible to view more favourably the attitude of those bishops who – breaking their oath of fealty – readily deserted Edward II for the cause of Isabella.

There are many who doubt whether it is feasible to undertake the biography of a medieval figure. In Orleton's case it is true that we can discover a great deal about his actions, but very little indeed about the motives which inspired them. Much remains dark, but it is hoped that a more realistic and open-minded examination of Orleton's life will help to change the monster of Baker's chronicle into the semblance of a human being beset by exceptional problems and divided loyalties: a man who in more settled times might have come down to us as a loyal servant of the monarch; a gifted administrator and diplomatist.

R. M. H.

Dalhousie University
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Those who have given me assistance in the various archives are too numerous to mention individually, but I gratefully acknowledge their patient and friendly help, in some cases rendered over a number of years. I have also been assisted by the prompt execution of orders for photographic copies of manuscripts and of printed material unavailable in Canada. Here I thank in particular the officers of the British Library, the Public Record Office, the Hampshire Record Office, the Hereford and Worcester Record Office (St Helen's, Worcester), Hereford Cathedral Library, the Joint Record Office at Lichfield, and the Central Reference Library, Birmingham.

Professor C. W. Dugmore, editor of the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, has kindly consented to the reprinting of the substance of my article on Orleton's Winchester episcopate.

Unpublished Crown Copyright material is reproduced by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. For permission to print the documents in the appendixes I thank the Bishop of Worcester, the Right Reverend Robin Woods, the Lichfield Diocesan Registrar, the Hampshire County Archivist and Diocesan Record Officer, and the British Library Board.

As usual, my wife has removed some of the infelicities of style which so readily arise from too close a proximity to the intractable phrases of the original sources. I am also much indebted to the staff of the Cambridge University Press for the care which has gone into the preparation of the typescript for publication.

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ABBREVIATIONS

In the footnotes the authors of articles and books are given together with abbreviated titles. Full details can be found in the Bibliography, where abbreviations for printed chronicles and episcopal registers are likewise extended.

<i>B.I.H.R.</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.</i>
<i>B.J.R.L.</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library.</i>
<i>B.L.</i>	British Library.
<i>Biog. Cantab.</i>	A. B. Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500</i> , Cambridge 1963.
<i>Biog. Oxon.</i>	A. B. Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to 1500</i> , 3 vols. Oxford 1957-9.
<i>C.C.R.</i>	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls.</i>
<i>C.Ch.W.</i>	<i>Calendar of Chancery Warrants.</i>
<i>C.F.R.</i>	<i>Calendar of Fine Rolls.</i>
<i>C.P.L.</i>	<i>Calendar of Papal Letters.</i>
<i>C.P.P.</i>	<i>Calendar of Papal Letters, Papal Petitions.</i>
<i>C.P.R.</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls.</i>
<i>C.Y.S.</i>	Canterbury and York Society.
<i>Cal. P.M.R.</i>	<i>Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls . . . of the City of London, 1323-1364</i> , ed. A. H. Thomas, Cambridge 1926.
<i>D.N.B.</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography.</i>
<i>E.E.T.S.</i>	Early English Text Society.
<i>E.H.R.</i>	<i>English Historical Review.</i>
<i>Excusaciones</i>	of Archbishop Stratford in 1341: see <i>Birchington</i> , pp. 27-36.
<i>Foedera</i>	<i>Foedera, Conventiones, etc.</i> , ed. T. Rymer, 3rd edn, 10 vols. The Hague 1739-45.
<i>G.E.C.</i>	G. E. Cokayne, <i>The Complete Peerage</i> , 12 vols. London 1910-59.
<i>H.B.C.</i>	<i>Handbook of British Chronology</i> , ed. F. M. Powicke and E. B. Fryde, 2nd edn London 1961.
<i>H.C.M.</i>	Hereford Cathedral Muniments.
<i>H.M.C.R.</i>	<i>Historical Manuscripts Commission's Report.</i>
<i>H.M.S.O.</i>	Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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- H.R.O.* *Hereford Register Orleton.* (Cited both from the MS. and from the printed edition.)
- J.E.H.* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History.*
- Le Neve* *John Le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300-1541,* 12 vols. Inst. Hist. Res. London 1962-7.
- Lit. Cant.* *Litterae Cantuarienses,* ed. J. B. Sheppard, 3 vols., R.S. 1887-9.
- M.* *Magister* (Master). (With respect to other university degrees I have followed Emden's abbreviations in *Biog. Oxon.* and *Biog. Cantab.*)
- M.G.H. SS.* *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores.*
- N.R.A.* National Register of Archives.
- O.H.S.* Oxford Historical Society.
- P.R.O.* Public Record Office.
- Responsiones* of Bishop Orleton in 1334: see Twysden, *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores Decem,* London 1652, cols. 2763-8; Lambeth MS. 1213, pp. 300-6.
- R.S.* Rolls Series.
- Rot. Parl.* *Rotuli Parliamentorum.* (See Bibliography.)
- S.C.H.* Studies in Church History.
- T.R.H.S.* *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.*
- V.C.H.* *Victoria History of the Counties of England.* (As individual volumes are readily identifiable from the abbreviated titles they are not included in the Bibliography.)
- W.A.M.* Westminster Abbey Muniments.
- W.H.S.* Worcestershire Historical Society.
- W.R.O.* *Worcester Register Orleton.* (Cited by both the folio number of the MS. and the number of the entry in the calendar to be published by H.M.S.O.)
- Win.R.O.* Winchester Register Orleton (MS.).
- Worc. Admin.* R. M. Haines, *The Administration of the Diocese of Worcester in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century,* London 1965.

All the Calendars and the Rolls Series (Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages) are listed in *Government Publications, British National Archives*, sectional list no. 24, H.M.S.O. 1974.