

Thomas Hatfield
Bishop, Soldier, and Politician

Thomas Hatfield (c. 1310–81) rose from origins amongst the Yorkshire gentry to become a valued royal servant under King Edward III. As such, he participated in the elaborate administration required for warfare in France in the late 1330s. Clerical careers in royal administration could lead to ecclesiastical office through royal patronage, and Hatfield's qualities marked him for early promotion. In 1345 he was elected Bishop of Durham, an office he held until his death. As bishop he retained a strong connection with royal service. He was also employed in the management of northern England and England's relations with Scotland. At the same time, he remained a dedicated advocate of the autonomy of the Durham palatinate over which he ruled as bishop. Hatfield's long episcopacy ensured that he made his mark on his bishopric and on the cathedral church of Durham, where his elaborate tomb is still seen. Hatfield College, a college of Durham University, is named after him.

Based on a series of lectures given at Hatfield College in 2010, the assumed seven hundredth anniversary of Thomas Hatfield's birth, this volume highlights the unique military, political, and clerical roles he performed and his notable legacies. The studies in this volume advance knowledge of both the man and his remarkable career and, in so doing, enhance understanding of the wider secular and religious world in which he lived.



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Thomas Hatfield Bishop, Soldier, and Politician

Lectures Given at Hatfield College, Durham University,
in Honour of the Seven Hundredth Anniversary of
the Birth of Bishop Thomas Hatfield

Edited by

ANTHONY BASH



Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Durham University

Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies
Toronto

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Thomas Hatfield : bishop, soldier, and politician / edited by Anthony Bash

Lectures given at Hatfield College, Durham University, in honour of the
seven hundredth anniversary of the birth of Bishop Thomas Hatfield.
Durham publications in medieval and Renaissance studies.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Co-published by: Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Durham
University.

ISBN 978-0-88844-440-0

1. Hatfield, Thomas, 1310?-1381 – Congresses. 2. Hatfield,
Thomas, 1310?-1381 – Military leadership – Congresses. 3. Catholic
Church. Bishopric of Durham (England) – History – Congresses.
4. Catholic Church – Great Britain – Bishops – Biography – Congresses.
5. Durham (England : County) – Church history – Congresses.
6. Great Britain – History – Edward III, 1327-1377 – Congresses.
I. Bash, Anthony, 1952- II. Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies
III. University of Durham. Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies

BX1495.D87 T56 2012

274.28/605 23

C2012-904865-8

© 2012

Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Durham University

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ANTHONY BASH

Preface

In 2010 Hatfield College celebrated the seven hundredth anniversary of the likely date of the birth of the bishop after whom the College is named, Thomas Hatfield.

Some of us at the College knew relatively little about Bishop Hatfield. Even the College archivist's *History* of the College has only one paragraph on Bishop Hatfield.¹ We felt it was time to learn more, as well as to celebrate our eponymous founder.

To that end, in Epiphany Term 2010, we held a lecture series at the College on Thomas Hatfield. Our thanks go to Richard Britnell for guiding us as to whom to approach to speak. We are grateful to Michael Prestwich, Mark Ormrod, Christian Liddy, and Richard Britnell for giving the lectures. Edited versions of the lectures appear in this book.

Later in the year, at evensong on the eve of Hatfield Day,² the Bishop of Durham, Dr N.T. Wright – himself a formidable New Testament scholar – gave an address on Bishop Hatfield, which is printed as Appendix One. Dr David Boardman, who attended the lectures in Epiphany Term, has contributed a second appendix on Durham Cathedral in Bishop Hatfield's time.

We now bring the lectures and the other contributions to a wider public. I am confident the lectures – in their quality, depth, and range of learning – aptly illustrate our College motto, *Vel primus vel cum primis*.

1 W.A. Moyes, *Hatfield 1846–1996: A History of Hatfield College in the University of Durham* (Durham: Hatfield College Trust, 1996), 3.

2 “Hatfield Day” is the College's annual celebration (held towards the end of Easter term) to mark the end of the University's examination period. The College commemorates Bishop Hatfield at choral evensong in Durham Cathedral the day before.

