



**Clerk, Chancellor, Castaway (1374–1419): Faction and  
Politics in the International Career of a Lancastrian  
Servant \***

**Partidarismo e política na carreira internacional de um servidor  
da Casa de Lencastre (1374–1419)**

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## RESUMO

Antigo membro da clerezia paroquial e servidor de Ricardo II de Inglaterra, Adam Davenport tornar-se-ia, em Portugal, num dos principais oficiais régios da rainha D. Filipa de Lencastre, filha de João de Gante (John of Gaunt) e irmã do futuro Henrique IV, alçado por rei após a deposição de Ricardo II. Desejando regressar ao país que o viu nascer, e como tal abandonando a corte portuguesa, Davenport irá enfrentar a resistência de Henrique IV, o que acabará por levá-lo a um *terminus vitae* em condições de relativa modéstia.

Este artigo delinea, pois, a carreira de Adam Davenport, ao longo de 45 anos (entre 1374 e 1419), através de dois países e de regimes políticos distintos, primeiro como beneficiado ao nível paroquial, depois como administrador régio e, por fim, como forasteiro no seu país de origem. À medida que as associações pessoais e laborais de Davenport com os seus sucessivos patronos se mantêm ou vão sendo perdidas, vê-se condicionado o seu acesso a redes de patronato e distribuição de mercês. Ao pôr em evidência o percurso tripartido de Adam Davenport, o artigo pretende chamar a atenção para a acção do desenraizamento (geográfico e socioeconómico) e dos poderes seculares sobre um grupo social em afirmação.

**Palavras-chave:** Henrique IV de Inglaterra; Casa e Dinastia de Lencastre; funcionalismo régio; Casa real e da rainha; Migração medieval.

## ABSTRACT

A former member of the parish clergy and an occasional servant of Richard II, the scholar Adam Davenport became one of the main household officials of the Portuguese queen, Philippa of Lancaster, the daughter of John of Gaunt and the sister of Richard II's usurper, Henry IV. On stepping down from office and Portugal's royal court, he returned to his native country only to meet with Henry IV's continued disapproval, which eventually led him to a *terminus vitae* in relative modesty and obscurity.

This paper traces Adam Davenport's professional trajectory of 45 years, from 1374 to 1419, across contrastive political regimes in two different countries, first as a local cleric, then as a senior administrator, and eventually as an unwaged outsider. As the social and financial ties between Davenport and his consecutive benefactors were kept or lost, according to the distribution of grace and the varying configuration of affinities, so Davenport's fortune changed. The details of this three-tiered career put into focus the critical role played by displacement (geographical as much as societal) and the secular patronage on which men like Davenport — a middling member of an expanding clerical class — came to depend for survival.

**Keywords:** Henry IV of England; House of Lancaster; Royal administration; Reginal / the queen's household; Medieval migration.



## Introduction

The primary focus of this biographical paper is the international trajectory of Adam Davenport. The professional career of this otherwise fairly unknown character started at the parish level and the local church, progressing to the royal administration, as a prosperous high officer, and eventually it finished in anonymity and almost redundancy. These three stages were separated by Davenport's travels, first from England to Lisbon, and then from Lisbon to the English southwest. As this career, spanning the period between 1374 and 1419, developed so did the political backdrop. The circumstances of Adam Davenport will be considered accordingly, in the remit of a background discussion about migration, displacement, service, and adaptation in between changing geographical and political conditions.

## Clerk

Adam Davenport, *clericus*, is known to have taken a first degree in Law and to have been ordained into the higher orders sometime in his career<sup>1</sup>. We first hear of him as the rector of St Peter Mancroft in Norwich, in 1374<sup>2</sup>. Probably in his mid-twenties at that time, he was a quite active member of the local church. Between September 1378 and September 1379, Davenport — described as “master” — held a *centum solidorum* prebend from the diocese of Lincoln, which on 17 March 1382 he had exchanged for another prebend, in Dinder, diocese of Wells, to which he was admitted on the following 5 of May<sup>3</sup>. For some time until 1381, he had tithes

<sup>1</sup> Around 1379 or 1380, Davenport was described as “*licenciatus in legibus*”: *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II*. Ed. Édouard Perroy. London: Camden Society, 1933, doc. 8, p. 5. In 1416, he was in priest's orders: HINGESTON-RANDOLPH, F. C. – *The Register of Edmund Stafford (A.D. 1395-1419); An Index and Abstract of its Contents*. London: George Bell & Sons, 1886, pp. 211, 339-340.

<sup>2</sup> *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions from All Souls MS. 182*. Ed. Mary Dominica Legge. Oxford: Blackwell, 1941, doc. 28, pp. 73-74.

<sup>3</sup> KING, H. P. F. – “Prebendaries: *Centum Solidorum (de prepositis)*”. in LE NEVE, John (ed.) – *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300-1541*. Vol. 1, *Lincoln Diocese*. London: Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 1962, pp. 50-52, p. 50; JONES, B. – “Prebendaries: Dinder”. in LE NEVE, John (ed.) – *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300-1541*. Vol. 8, *Bath and Wells Diocese*. London: Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 1964, pp. 42-44, p. 42.

from the prebend of Caddington Major (Beds.), a manor belonging to the dean and chapter of St Paul's cathedral, London<sup>4</sup>. By the mid 1380s, therefore, it is likely that a young Adam Davenport enjoyed a comfortable livelihood, prospering as parish clergy.

It is conceivable that the connection to St Paul's either facilitated contacts with the crown or that it was an upshot of such contacts. Indeed, not only was Davenport under the eye of Richard II's government, he appears to have been in the king's confidence to a considerable degree. In 1379 or 1380, Richard sent him on a mission to the Roman curia, to personally deliver to Urban VI the king's letters, requesting certain benefices to be allotted to three prominent English clerks and royal administrators — the keeper of the privy seal, the treasurer, and the comptroller of the royal household<sup>5</sup>. In 1382, the Westminster courts also decided for Adam Davenport, clerk, and two associates in a civil lawsuit, the full circumstances of which are unspecified, that opposed them to other men<sup>6</sup>. In 1386, a second recorded voyage followed, as an expeditionary army assembled under the banner of John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster, as claimant to the Castilian throne. In early January that year, letters of protection were issued for over one hundred men going with Gaunt to "Spain", meaning the Iberian Peninsula. On 6 March 1386, protections were granted to a further two hundred fifty, or so, individuals<sup>7</sup>. There can be no doubt regarding the identity of the person in question, since Adam Davenport's name and occupation were reproduced in two further letters of protection<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> HORN, Joyce M. – "Prebendaries: Caddington Major". in LE NEVE, John (ed.) – *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300-1541*. Vol. 5, *St Paul's, London*. London: Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 1963, pp. 23-25, p. 23; RUSSELL, Peter E. – *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 542.

<sup>5</sup> *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II*, doc. 8, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. A.D. 1381-1385*. Coord. H. C. Maxwell-Lyte. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920, p. 137.

<sup>7</sup> *Fœdera, conventiones, literæ, et cujuscunque generis acta publica, inter reges Angliæ, et alios quosvis imperatoris, reges, pontifices, principes, vel communitates...* Ed. Thomas Rymer. London: A. & J. Churchill, 20 vols, 1704-1735, vol. 7, pp. 490-491, 499-501.

<sup>8</sup> Since letters of protection remained valid for one year only, and Gaunt's departure seems to have suffered delay, reissuing them made sure that they remained up-to-date: London (Kew), The National Archives (henceforth TNA) C 76/70, m. 19 (of 1 April) and C 76/71, m. 11 (of 28 May).

Administrative military records can be particularly sparse in detail, and the letters of protection in question are no exception. They are concise — and yet consistent — in that they record “Adam Davenport, clericus” among the many members of Lancaster’s following. Clarification on the standing, as declared, of Davenport as *clericus* should help appreciate his existing and future career. It seems important, therefore, to ascertain in what quality did Davenport embark on this journey. The term *clericus* is particularly elusive. In accordance with custom, it should stand for the recipient of tonsure, or otherwise someone in the church’s orders. In practice, it denotes the ambiguity existing between the clergyman and the educated, literate layperson. By this period, being a *clericus* certainly did not imply that there was a clear-cut separation from the laity. Certainly, in some parts of England, men of that description filled a wide range of administrative occupations, from religious to secular<sup>9</sup>. It would be wrong, therefore, to presume that a member of such a polymorphous group would exclusively commit to the ecclesiastical life, even if ecclesiastical patronage was at stake<sup>10</sup>.

In this context, it seems sensible to accept the meaning of *clericus* as that of “clerk” — as an occupation, rather than a socio-cultural construct. To witness, staffers in the duke of Lancaster’s military convoy were variously described as goldsmiths, bowmakers, saddlers, embroiderers, painters; all of whom were clearly laymen. There were others whose attributions ranged from chaplain to parson to archdeacon — men such as Walter Levenaunt, Philip Kelsey, or John Chrischurch — indicating their employment as religious personnel. A small army of *clerici* followed along, made up of Adam Davenport, Peter Tebaud, Edmund Langham,

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<sup>9</sup> RUTLEDGE, Elizabeth – “Lawyers and Administrators: The Clerks of Late-Thirteenth-Century Norwich”. in HARPER-BILL, Christopher (ed.) – *Medieval East Anglia*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005, pp. 83-98, p. 84. More widely, see CLANCHY, Michael T. – *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013 (1979); and OEXLE, Otto Gerhard – “Perceiving Social Reality in the Early and High Middle Ages: A Contribution to a History of Social Knowledge”. in JUSSEN, Bernhard (ed.) – *Ordering Medieval Society: Perspectives on Intellectual and Practical Modes of Shaping Social Relations*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, pp. 92-143.

<sup>10</sup> DAVIS, Virginia – “Clerics and the King’s Service in Late Medieval England”. in BARRALIS, Christine; BOUDET, Jean-Patrice; DELIVRÉ, Fabrice; GENET, Jean-Philippe (eds.) – *Église et État, Église ou État? Les clerics et la genèse de l’État moderne*. Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2014, pp. 25-33, §15.

Richard de Elnet, Master Robert Eldesley, Richard Stapildon, Hugh de Herle, and others<sup>11</sup>. Neither soldiers, craftsmen nor clerics, the clerks formed the backbone of Gaunt's itinerant officialdom.

### Chancellor

The armed force would leave to the Iberian Peninsula during the following summer, led by arguably the grandest magnate in England, second only to Richard II. The involvement of the house of Lancaster in Iberian affairs came on the tail of longstanding English interests in the region, although the key motivations of the moment stemmed from Gaunt's own circumstances. It is necessary to outline those circumstances if we are to make sense of Adam Davenport's presence in Portugal<sup>12</sup>.

In September 1371, John of Gaunt had taken as his second wife Constanza, the heiress of Pedro I of Castile. King Pedro had benefited from the enduring support of the English, including at the Battle of Nájera in April 1367, out of which Pedro's half-brother Enrique of Trastámara came defeated. The contribution of Gaunt, and especially of his older brother, the Black Prince, proved insufficient since two years later Pedro was killed at Enrique's own hands. Following through, Enrique lost no time in having himself crowned. By then, an explicitly anti-English treaty, signed between Enrique and Charles V of France in line with previous Franco-Castilian agreements, was already in force<sup>13</sup>. All of that made Gaunt — a *bona fide* candidate to becoming the king of Castile, as the consort of Pedro's rightful heiress — and his exile court the kernel of *petrismo*, attracting numerous partisans of the murdered king<sup>14</sup>. By the mid 1380s, Gaunt was finally able to persuade the English

<sup>11</sup> TNA C 76/70, m. 3, 11, 17, 20, 22, 26.

<sup>12</sup> GOODMAN, Anthony – “England and Iberia in the Middle Ages”. in JONES, Michael; VALE, Malcolm (eds.) – *England and her Neighbours, 1066–1453. Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais*. London and Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1989, pp. 73-96, encapsulates well Anglo-Iberian relations up until the mid-fourteenth century.

<sup>13</sup> DAUMET, Georges – *Étude sur l'Alliance de la France et de la Castille au XIVe et XVe siècles*. Paris: E. Bouillon, 1898, pp. 30-31.

<sup>14</sup> YEAGER, Robert F. – “Gower's Lancastrian Affinity: The Iberian Connection”. *Viator* 35 (2004), pp. 483-515.

parliament to part-finance the armed intervention in Castile which he was to lead<sup>15</sup>.

Meanwhile, another understanding was being reached, by which Richard II and the Portuguese king João I came together against the Trastámaras. The covenant, known as the Windsor treaty, was signed in May 1386. It enabled João to levy troops for his defence against Juan I of Castile, Enrique II's successor. The promises that João made in return, to champion the English — or should we say the Lancastrian — ambitions in the Iberian Peninsula, soon materialised. As John of Gaunt and *Doña Constanza's* armies descended upon Galicia, in northwestern Iberia, in summer 1386, their intent was twofold. On the one hand, they sought to disrupt Castilian politics by pressing the royal claim on the enemy's own ground, and on the other to draw their Portuguese allies even closer. As he prepared to utilise the armies of João I, Gaunt was ready to give away one of his daughters in marriage. A settlement to marry his eldest (from his first marriage, to Blanche of Lancaster) to João was contracted in northern Portugal at Ponte do Mouro on 1 November 1386. Gaunt and Constanza ratified it soon thereafter<sup>16</sup>.

Philippa of Lancaster married the Portuguese king in the city of Porto the following February (1387). This was a good fit for João, for besides Lancastrian wealth it brought along Plantagenet prestige, especially if one considers the Portuguese king's greatest shortcoming. The half-brother of the preceding monarch, Fernando I, João had been born out of wedlock. Rather than coming to him by right of succession, the crown had been presented to João by a fraction of the political society, in the midst of a civil war. João's entitlement to kingship thus remained controversial and contested. For these reasons, it was essential for the new regime to rely on a dignified, aptly-serviced royal household. The queen's household

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<sup>15</sup> GOODMAN, Anthony – *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe*. Harlow: Longman, 1992, pp. 115-116.

<sup>16</sup> RUSSELL, Peter E. – *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 439.

should be just as adequate<sup>17</sup>. This was to be the blueprint for Adam Davenport's entire Portuguese career.

The fifteenth-century Portuguese chronicler Fernão Lopes remains the main source for the makeup of Queen Philippa's household. Adam Davenport does not appear in Lopes's list of reginal officials, which included positions such as "mordomo-mor" (the master chamberlain, Lopo Dias de Sousa), "governador de sua fazemda" (the treasurer of the exchequer, Lourenço Eanes Fogaça), and "vedor da casa [da rainha]" (the superintendent of the queen's estate, Afonso Martins), but not that of chancellor. In fact, notwithstanding the queen's origins, no English names are mentioned whatsoever; although Lopes does point out that the queen's esquires were a mix of "ingresses e portuguesas", that is people of English and Portuguese descent<sup>18</sup>. At some point, the Englishman Sir Thomas Elie Payn would replace Lourenço Eanes Fogaça as the treasurer of the exchequer, on account of Fogaça's absence as the crown's diplomatic envoy<sup>19</sup>.

It is certain, however, that Adam Davenport had remained in Portugal, and that he was attached to Philippa's retinue. On 28 September 1387, that is about seven months into the creation of the queen's household, he was made rector of St Mary's church in Povos. He was referred to at this point as the queen's chancellor ("chancellor da Rainha")<sup>20</sup>; a position, we shall see, that would remain his for a further nine years. His benefice in Povos had come directly from the king's

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<sup>17</sup> All of this is described for example in COELHO, Maria Helena da Cruz – *D. João I. O que recolheu Boa Memória*. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2005, and SILVA, Manuela Santos – *Filipa de Lencastre: A rainha inglesa de Portugal*. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> LOPES, Fernão – *Cronica del Rei Dom Joham I de boa memoria e dos Reis de Portugal o decimo. Parte Segunda*. Ed. William J. Entwistle. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1968, ch. 97, p. 210. Soares da Silva, drawing from original sources, was also unable to identify the chancellor: SILVA, José Soares da – *Memorias para a História de Portugal, que comprehendem o governo del rey D. Joaõ o I., do anno de mil e trezentos e oitenta e tres, até o anno de mil e quatrocentos e trinta e tres*, vol. 2. Lisboa: Joseph Antonio da Sylva, 1731, p. 558.

<sup>19</sup> RUSSELL, Peter E. – *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 542 and n. 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Chancelarias Portuguesas. D. João I*. Ed. João José Alves Dias, vol. 2, tomo 1. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2005, doc. 272, p. 157.



patronage, on the death of Gonçalo Martins, the previous rector<sup>21</sup>. The presentation of Davenport to St Mary's ought to have yielded a substantial income. Sitting at the heart of the fertile *lezíria* plains, the riparian town of Povos, with its anchorage on the Tagus river, was located some thirty-five kilometers upstream from Lisbon<sup>22</sup>. St Mary's in Povos was provided with an endowment to match. A survey from 1320/1321 lists it as being worth 350 *libras* with its chaplaincy, while an estimate dating from before 1336 says 700 *libras*<sup>23</sup>. This placed St Mary's among the wealthiest foundations within the entire Lisbon bishopric. Centuries later, the clergy of St Mary were historically believed to have possessed numerous privileges<sup>24</sup>. As chancellor to the queen, Davenport was evidently also a waged household member in addition to his rectorship income. The office came with an annuity of no less than six or seven thousand *libras* — over twice as much as the average fee of a knight of the king's household<sup>25</sup>. Not only did this mean that Davenport had come under the royal protection, he had also been elevated to high office and given the corresponding means of income.

Davenport's appointment to St Mary's has been regarded as a mark of João I's affinity and trust<sup>26</sup>. The same is suggested by the fact that in 1394 a servant of

<sup>21</sup> FARELO, Mário – “O padroado régio na diocese de Lisboa durante a Idade Média: uma instituição *in diminuendo*”. *Fragmenta Historica* 1 (2013), pp. 39-107, table on p. 97 (“Santa Maria de Povos”).

<sup>22</sup> CONDE, Sílvio Alves – “A vila de Povos na Idade Média”. in *Senhor da Boa Morte: Mitos, História e Devoção*. Vila Franca de Xira: Câmara Municipal de Vila Franca de Xira, 2000, pp. 53-66; RIBEIRO, José Alberto – “A capela do Senhor da Boa Morte”. in *Senhor da Boa Morte: Mitos, História e Devoção*. Vila Franca de Xira: Câmara Municipal de Vila Franca de Xira, 2000, pp. 67-76.

<sup>23</sup> BOISSELLIER, Stéphane – *La construction administrative d'un royaume: registres de bénéfices ecclésiastiques portugais (XIII-XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2012, docs. 2 and 4.

<sup>24</sup> SANTA MARIA, Fr. Agostinho de – *Santuário Mariano, e Historia das Imagens milagrosas de Nossa Senhora, e das milagrosamente apparecidas, em graça dos Prêgadores, & dos devotos da mesma Senhora*, vol. 2. Lisboa: Officina de Antonio Pedrozo Galraõ, 1707, p. 377: “os Parochos desta Igreja [de Santa Maria] gozavão de muytos privilegios”.

<sup>25</sup> This would have been the chancellor's fee somewhere between 1402 and 1406. See, with editorial variance: FARO, Jorge – *Receitas e despesas da fazenda real de 1384 a 1481 (Subsídios documentais)*. Lisboa: Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 1965, pp. 22–47, at p. 42; *Monumenta Henricina*. Ed. António Joaquim Dias Dinis, vol. 1 (1143-1411). Coimbra: Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do V Centenário da Morte do Infante D. Henrique, 1960, pp. 280-293 (on p. 289); SILVA, José Soares da – *Collecçam dos documentos, com que se authorizam as memorias para a vida del Rey D. João o I, escritas nos primeiros três tomos*. Tomo 4. Lisboa Occidental: na Officina de Joseph Antonio da Sylva, 1734, pp. 214-221, on p. 218.

<sup>26</sup> VENTURA, Margarida Garcês – *Poder régio e liberdades eclesiasticas (1383-1450)*, 2 vols. Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, 1993. Doctoral thesis, vol. 1, p. 280.

Chancellor Davenport, a man named Diogo, was awarded the privilege of ringing the church bells in Porto — presumably in lieu of his master — in commemoration of the birth of the royal prince Henrique, the future Henry *the Navigator*. The gesture earned Diogo a lavish 150 *libras*<sup>27</sup>. The fact that Adam Davenport had been deemed deserving of the chancellorship in the first place, and that he should stay in office seem to vouch for his professional and intellectual abilities. This firmly placed him in the top echelon of the non-noble court elite, as the highest standing member of the queen’s administration besides the *vedor*. At some point in this period, the clergyman fathered a baby boy from an unmarried woman<sup>28</sup>. Well catered for and apparently in the good graces of the king and queen, there is no apparent reason why Davenport would question what appears to have been a rather comfortable existence.

### Castaway

About two years later, Davenport was the subject of correspondence between his queen and Richard II. Writing on 1 October 1396, Philippa personally informed her cousin that after eight or nine years of service it had become her chancellor’s wish to return to his homeland of England — “son propre paijs, de naturele inclinacioun”. Philippa added, “il ad tresgrande desire si dieux li voleit ottoier de fe[re] ses darreins jours en v[ost]re tresnoble terre Dengleterre”<sup>29</sup>. As she recommended to Richard the letter-bearer, it was Philippa’s strong expectation that Davenport be given the best prospects possible. Indeed, at this point in his career, Davenport was a well-qualified and seasoned civil servant, besides the protégé of Richard’s Portuguese ally. Philippa’s appeal was of greater import because it explicitly acknowledged that Master Adam had no means left to support himself back at home<sup>30</sup>. For him, having left the country some ten years previously also meant leaving behind his prebends in Norwich and Wells, plus the one

<sup>27</sup> *Monumenta Henricina ...*, vol. 1, p. 271.

<sup>28</sup> “Tomas Porte” would not be legitimised until 1 February 1415: *Chancelarias Portuguesas. D. João I*. Ed. João José Alves Dias, vol. 3, *tomo* 2. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2006, doc. 756, p. 223.

<sup>29</sup> London, British Library MS Royal 10 B IX, ff. 7v-8.

<sup>30</sup> “[P]our tant qil nad b[ie]nfiges nautre possession par q[ue] Il se purra honestement sustener sicome app[er]tient a son estat”.

attached to St Paul's. Considering his mission to the papal curia on Richard II's orders, Davenport's absence from the country may have meant missing out on further opportunities for advancement in the English crown's service. As he was summoned before Richard in 1396, it must have seemed vital for him to reclaim back something of his former connections and benefices.

From the available records, it is certain that the former chancellor was far from contented after his return to England, even years since Philippa had first committed him to Richard II. This is abundantly clear from a string of communications about the living of Stokenham, Devonshire. On learning that the prebend had fallen vacant, Thomas FitzAlan, earl of Arundel and Surrey, addressed Richard II's successor, Henry IV, probably in June 1403, requesting that it be given to "Mestre Adam Dampont le Chaunceller du Roigne de Portugal". Davenport, he added, had proved valuable in assisting the earl with his own affairs. FitzAlan — a protégé of Henry, who re-invested him in the earldom after Richard II had Thomas' father convicted and executed for treason — must have been referring to his projected marriage with Beatriz of Avis, Philippa's Portuguese step-daughter, the planning of which likely involved Davenport. One might expect that his nomination for the prebend would do honour to the queen of Portugal, Henry's own sister<sup>31</sup>. In fact, by enlisting FitzAlan's support on the matter, Philippa had plausibly continued to look after her former attendant. She would also have counted on her brother's endorsement.

Yet another magnate seems to have taken Davenport's plea before King Henry. This was none other than the primate of England, Thomas Arundel<sup>32</sup>. The

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<sup>31</sup> *Original Letters Illustrative of English History; including Numerous Royal Letters* [...]. Ed. Henry Ellis, vol. 1. London: Richard Bentley, 1846, letter 24, pp. 52-53. On the planning of the Anglo-Portuguese match, see especially SILVA, Manuela Santos – "O casamento de D. Beatriz (filha natural de D. João I) com Thomas Fitzalan (Conde de Arundel) – paradigma documental da negociação de uma aliança". in BRAGA, Isabel Drumond; FARIA, Ana Leal de (eds.) – *Problematizar a História: Estudos de História Moderna em Homenagem a Maria do Rosário Themudo Barata*. Lisboa: Caleidoscópio, 2007, pp. 77-91.

<sup>32</sup> ENTWISTLE, William J.; RUSSELL, Peter E. – "A Rainha D. Felipa e a sua Côrte". in *Congresso do Mundo Português: Publicações*. Vol. II: *Memórias e comunicações apresentadas ao Congresso de História Medieval (II Congresso)*. Lisboa: Comissão Executiva dos Centenários, 1940, pp. 319-346, at p. 346, n. 1, though failing to identify their source.

archbishop of Canterbury (who was Thomas FitzAlan's uncle) was a staunch supporter of Henry. Once Richard II's chancellor, Arundel had since become one of the closest advisers to the new king. It is likely that Queen Philippa had reached out beforehand to Archbishop Arundel in Davenport's defence<sup>33</sup>. All factored in, Henry IV's refusal would have gone against the grain, but this was exactly what happened: the king did not nominate Davenport, and it was on his decision that the prebend fell on Richard Prentys, on 14 July 1404<sup>34</sup>.

It would be another twelve years before the living of Stokenham fell vacant once again, on 1 October 1416, by death of the said Richard Prentys<sup>35</sup>. Once again, two *clerici* vied for the position. One was Edward Prentys, possibly a relative of Richard, and the other an elderly Adam Davenport. The right of appointment to Stokenham had reverted to Thomas Montacute, fourth earl of Salisbury. On 14 October Montacute had Edward nominated. According to the register of Edmund Stafford (bishop of Exeter, 1395–1419), Edward Prentys was already “well beneficed elsewhere” as the archdeacon of Essex in St Paul's Cathedral, London. Interestingly, Thomas Montacute's mother, the Countess Matilda (the widow of John Montacute, beheaded for high treason in 1400), challenged him by presenting Adam Davenport as her own candidate, in turn. On 15 October 1416 a commission was instructed to enquire after the validity of Matilda's right of appointment. The commission found Davenport to be a clerk in his sixties, in priest's orders, deprived of any benefice<sup>36</sup>. Two decades after having abandoned a privileged position in the Portuguese royal court, Davenport was still effectively unwaged.

On 28 October 1416, upon the commission's decision in favour of Thomas Montacute, Edward Prentys was appointed to Stokenham without reservation. Yet,

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<sup>33</sup> Further on Philippa of Lancaster's English correspondents, see FARIA, Tiago Viúla de, “From Norwich to Lisbon: Factionalism, Personal Association, and Conveying the *Confessio Amantis*”. in SÁEZ-HIDALGO, Ana; YEAGER, Robert F. (eds.) – *John Gower in England and Iberia: Manuscripts, Influences, Reception*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014, pp. 131-138.

<sup>34</sup> HINGESTON-RANDOLPH, F. C. – *The Register of Edmund Stafford (A.D. 1395-1419); An Index and Abstract of its Contents*. London: George Bell & Sons, 1886.

<sup>35</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the data on Stokenham is drawn from HINGESTON-RANDOLPH, F. C. – *The Register of Edmund Stafford (A.D. 1395-1419) ...*, pp. 339-340.

<sup>36</sup> It is not known when Davenport was admitted into the higher orders.

Matilda decided to appeal to the Westminster courts. This time around, the verdict was in her favour and the commission's ruling was overturned. As she recovered the right of presentation to the prebend, Davenport came again on the cards. A mandate to Bishop Stafford to have him admitted was duly issued on 28 April 1417. On 10 May following, Davenport was finally invested into the rectory of Stokenham with its stipend, taxed at £33 6s. 8d.. His appointment of a proxy, one John Shyllyngford, seems to suggest that Davenport either lived elsewhere or was already in poor health<sup>37</sup>. Nonetheless, the old clerk did move to Stokenham, as he was allowed a three-month licence of non-residence, for between 1 August and 1 November 1419<sup>38</sup>. This is the last we hear of him.

His advancing age notwithstanding, the moment he was provided for Davenport moved a complaint against his old rival, the late Richard Prentys, alleging dilapidations. Accordingly, a commission of enquiry was set in motion, on 15 May 1417. Two weeks from that day, on the ruling of the archdeacon of Totnes, a commission for sequestration was in place. It found that there indeed had been dilapidations, the damage amounting to £50 or more<sup>39</sup>. Davenport had been proven right. If the onetime royal chancellor had been resentful of Prentys, this was the satisfaction he got.

### **Faction and Politics**

It is striking that Davenport was turned down, even for a comparatively modest benefaction, despite his name having been suggested by some of Henry IV's main co-religionists. A queen and ally — and Henry's own sister — had personally insisted on it. If Davenport had proven incapable to recoup any reasonable means of livelihood before 1416 (that is, three years after Henry IV's death), that must have been down to the king's ill will. What reasons lay behind Henry's continued disapproval?

<sup>37</sup> HINGESTON-RANDOLPH, F. C. – *The Register of Edmund Stafford (A.D. 1395-1419) ...*, p. 211.

<sup>38</sup> HINGESTON-RANDOLPH, F. C. – *The Register of Edmund Stafford (A.D. 1395-1419) ...*, p. 340.

<sup>39</sup> HINGESTON-RANDOLPH, F. C. – *The Register of Edmund Stafford (A.D. 1395-1419) ...*, p. 340.

The most reasonable explanation lies in political change, the restructuring of affinities around the crown, and personal preference in the dispensation of grace, all of which were synonym with Henry IV. Henry's choice for Stokenham had been Richard Prentys, hardly a chance pick. Prentys was already among the ecclesiastic administrators closest to the crown. In 1401, he had been reappointed (and seemingly promoted) a canon of the royal chapel of St Stephen at Westminster. Two years later, Henry created him dean of the chapel royal. Prentys's endowments beside the seat of royal power in London were further consolidated through his being appointed, in 1402, the master of the Royal Hospital and Collegiate Church of St. Katharine by the Tower. He held the positions of master of St. Katharine and dean of the chapel royal into the 1410s. As to Prentys's seat in the chapter of St Stephen's, it was eventually exchanged for another in St George's chapel in Windsor castle, of which he became a canon in April 1403<sup>40</sup>. The prestige of St George's chapel was perhaps unmatched among English royal foundations. Besides, it was the seat of the Order of the Garter, an institution whose pre-eminence in the early years of Henry IV's regime has been well proven<sup>41</sup>. It was therefore at the height of his career, and very much in the confidence of the king, that in 1404 Richard Prentys came up to Stokenham.

Although at some point both men had been in the patronage of Richard II, Adam Davenport was not nearly as successful as Prentys in coping with Henry of Lancaster's coming into power. Probably, this was more to do with Henry's political judgement than with the individual merits of either clerk, as both were equally accomplished. Adam Davenport's origins can perhaps be traced back to a gentry family variously known as Dampport, Daumpport, and Davenport — the Portuguese spelling of Adam's name, "Adam Porto" and "Adom Porte", suggesting the reading Daumpport<sup>42</sup>. The medieval Davenport estates, located in Marton, in

<sup>40</sup> OLLARD, S. L. – *Fasti Wyndesorienses: The Deans and Canons of Windsor*. Windsor: Oxley and Son, 1950, p. 98.

<sup>41</sup> COLLINS, Hugh E. – *The Order of the Garter, 1348-1461: Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 107-118.

<sup>42</sup> Examples in the *Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. Henry IV*, vol. 5: *Index volume*. Ed. A. E. Stamp, with an Index by J. J. O'Reilly. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1938, pp. 232, 235; in Portuguese, *Chancelarias Portuguesas. D. João I*. Ed. João José Alves

Woodford, in Broomhall, and in the township of Davenport itself, were therefore concentrated in the hundred of Macclesfield, County Cheshire<sup>43</sup>. The protection which, as we saw, Adam Davenport enjoyed from Countess Matilda may further point towards his Cheshire origins, since the Montagues had control over a number of lordships in that county, including Hawarden, where the Davenports are known to have been based<sup>44</sup>.

Richard II's fondness for Chester and its people is well attested. The county was elevated to a principality in 1397 (only to be deprived of that honour by Henry IV, a mere two years later) and it provided the recruiting grounds for a permanent force of seven squadrons of archers, created with Richard's personal protection in mind. One of these squadrons had Ralph Davenport as its commander<sup>45</sup>. According to the Dieulacres chronicle, Ralph Davenport was among the captains that remained loyal to Richard in early August 1399, as the king's depleted royal army returned from Ireland, to face the future Henry IV<sup>46</sup>. Just a few months before, Richard had made by writ of privy seal Ralph Davenport, esquire, the grant of goods and chattels worth 100 *l.*, belonging to Archer and Henry Davenport, as the two men had been tried for murder<sup>47</sup>.

Members of the Davenport family besides Adam Davenport had links with the house of Lancaster, namely in the local echelons of the duchy. In July 1383, John of Gaunt had "nostre trescher et bien ame Roger Daunport" nominated as his justice

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Dias, vol. 2, tomo 1. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2005, doc. 272, p. 157, and vol. 3, tomo 2, doc. 756, p. 223.

<sup>43</sup> Consultation of the Bromley Davenport Muniments (BDM) in the University of Manchester Library, which was not possible during the preparation of this paper, might illuminate Adam Davenport's putative links with the family.

<sup>44</sup> DAVIES, R. R. – "Richard and the Principality of Chester, 1397-9". in BOULAY, F. R. H. du; BARRON, Caroline M. (eds.) – *The Reign of Richard II: essays in honour os Mary McKisak*. London: University of London and Athlone Press, 1971, pp. 256-279, p. 260.

<sup>45</sup> DAVIES, R. R. – "Richard and the Principality of Chester, 1397-9" ..., pp. 256-279, p. 269.

<sup>46</sup> *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397-1400: The Reign of Richard II*. Ed. Chris Given-Wilson. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993, pp. 170-173.

<sup>47</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. A.D. 1396-1399*. Coord. H. C. Maxwell-Lyte. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1909, p. 544 (23 April 1399).

in Lancashire<sup>48</sup>. Another local justice was John Davenport<sup>49</sup>. Maybe this was the same John Davenport who took letters of attorney for one year, starting on 14 May 1381, so as to follow Juan Fernández Andeiro, a knight “of Spain” and a retainer of Gaunt, to Portugal<sup>50</sup>. Considering the association of both Davenports — John and Adam — to the duchy of Lancaster, the possibility that they were related can be admitted. John’s voyage to Portugal might mean that knowledge of this country was passed on following his return.

Henry IV himself can be tied to certain individuals of the Davenport stock, but it is equally clear that he had serious misgivings about others. In 1401 a certain Geoffrey Davenport, described as the king’s clerk, was confirmed as the prebendary of Blackrath, diocese of Ossory, Ireland. Subsequently, he was allowed to receive his stipend outside of Ireland<sup>51</sup>. Six years later, he was still tied to the king in some capacity, having received 100 marks from the royal coffers<sup>52</sup>. As part of the household confirmations made in August 1413, Henry V rewarded one John Davenport for life in the office of king’s messenger, which he had held from Henry IV’s time<sup>53</sup>. Others hardly fared so well. As Henry IV faced insurrection from Ricardian loyalists early in the reign, Robert, the son of John de Davenport of Broomhall, and the tailor Thomas Davenport were sued “specially and severely” for their treasonous conduct along with a number of other Chester men. They were notorious exceptions to the general pardon granted by the king to his people of Chester<sup>54</sup>. Two others — Arthur de Davenport, the owner of beasts and goods valued at 40 *l.*, and Roger Davenport, parson of Hawarden — would side with Henry Hotspur against the king at Shrewsbury, in 1403<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> *John of Gaunt’s Register, 1379-1383*. Ed. Robert Somerville and Eleanor C. Lodge, vol. 2. London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1937, p. xxvii, doc. 900 (p. 283).

<sup>49</sup> WALKER, Simon – *The Lancastrian Affinity, 1361-1399*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 122, n. 28. No Davenports, however, are found among Gaunt’s retainers, annuitants (Appendix 1, pp. 262-284), and officials (Appendix 2, pp. 285-291).

<sup>50</sup> TNA C 76/65, m. 7.

<sup>51</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls... A.D. 1399-1401 ...*, pp. 410, 424.

<sup>52</sup> *Calendar of the Close Rolls... A.D. 1405-1409 ...*, p. 195.

<sup>53</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls... A.D. 1413-1416 ...*, p. 103.

<sup>54</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls... A.D. 1399-1401 ...*, pp. 285-286.

<sup>55</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls... A.D. 1401-1405 ...*, pp. 264, 365.



## Conclusion

Even Alcuin of York, a resident of Charlemagne’s magnificent Aachen court, had been memorably homesick of his native England. Whatever Adam Davenport’s own reasons were to return to his native country, they came at a risk. We stand reminded that the success of middling members of the clerical class, of which Davenport is but a single example, often depended upon the successful acquisition and maintenance of ties of solidarity and patronage before their regional lords, and ultimately before the crown itself. The former parish clerk had willingly let go of a privileged position in Portugal as a royal chancellor in return for uncertainty back home. In the decade spanning from 1386 to 1396, Davenport’s working connections in England had been severed, at best dramatically weakened. Above all else, the 1399 regime change witnessed a full reshuffling of privilege and grace. Perceived as a player of little consequence, incapable of contributing to the new king’s agenda, Davenport was left out of that new order perhaps deliberately — notwithstanding the repeated efforts from his high-flying patrons, including the king’s own sister (the wife of a sworn overseas ally).

It is indeed striking that no dynastic and political considerations seem to have been taken into account in Henry IV’s handling of Adam Davenport. Even as he proved himself a valuable go-between for Thomas FitzAlan in the early 1400s — playing smoothly into Henry’s hands, as the earl’s wedding with Beatriz helped with the Anglo-Portuguese alliance<sup>56</sup> — Davenport and his protectors found themselves utterly incapable of bending the king’s will. As far as can be told, Henry could not find sufficient use for a well-schooled, seasoned civil servant with an “international” background of consequence; not even in the busy Lancastrian diplomacy with the Iberian kingdoms, Portugal in particular. For all its merits, Davenport’s transboundary clerical and administrative career could not hold up to the dramatic political changes of 1399.

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<sup>56</sup> NASCIMENTO, Aires Augusto (ed.) – *Princesas de Portugal: Contratos matrimoniais dos Séculos XV e XVI*. Lisboa: Cosmos, 1992, doc. 2, pp. 22-29.

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