

GUILLELMI DE OCKHAM OPERA POLITICA. Volume 3. Edited by H. S. Offler. (Manchester University Press.)

The appearance of this third volume in the series of William of Ockham's political writings, with critical text and introductions, handsomely published by the Manchester University Press, will be welcome both to medievalists in general and to pupils and friends of the late J. G. Sikes of Jesus College, Cambridge, in particular. It may be regarded as in part a tribute to his memory and to the great courage and enterprise with which he embarked on this project nearly twenty years ago. The work, interrupted by the outbreak of war and his own untimely death, is now being continued under the guidance of a distinguished editorial board. We must still await the second volume which will conclude the *Opus 90 Dierum* partly edited by Sikes himself in the first volume; this third volume of the series, edited by H. S. Offler, gives us three minor but interesting works of Ockham, the *Epistola ad Fratres Minores*, the *Tractatus contra Joannem*, and another tractate to which Richard Scholz, who identified it in 1911, has given the title *Tractatus contra Benedictum*. The letter to the Friars Minor is a *pièce justificative* addressed to the General Chapter of 1334 explaining his adherence to the cause of the ex-Minister General Michael of Cesena and defending their refusal to attend the Chapter. The two tractates are a determined effort to involve Pope John XXII, despite his death-bed profession of orthodoxy, as well as his successor Pope Benedict XII in heresy regarding the deferment of the Beatific Vision, and in other errors and malpractices. Like the *Epistola* their basic intent is to justify the position of those who were in rebellion against the Avignon papacy. Many of Ockham's views on ecclesiology, on the *regula fidei*, and on the relations between Papacy and Empire can be seen here in the process of formation. The three works may be fitly taken together, as being all composed at Munich between 1334 and 1337, and drawing upon a common stock of anti-Avignonese arguments which were being built up then and there by the Imperial partisans. There are no major ideas of Ockham here which are not more fully worked out in better known works like the *Dialogus*, but it is of special interest to see the weapons being forged in the actual heat of the controversy. The edition has been based on the only known manuscript, Paris, Bibl. Lat. 3387 ff. 262 v-265 v, 177 r-214 r, 214 r-262 r, described previously in Volume I: variants by previous editors (*in toto* for the *Epistola* by Miller, Baudry and Brampton, and partially for the other works by Richard Scholz) are given in the margin.

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