

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR A. R. MYERS

Alexander Reginald Myers died of cancer on 2 July 1980, aged sixty-seven. He had served on the Council of this Society since 1950; these *Transactions* for 1964 included his 'An official progress through Lancashire and Cheshire in 1476'. He was President of the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire from 1967 until his death. Being a Yorkshireman by birth and schooling, his loyalty to the rose of another colour can be linked with his undergraduate days and research training at Manchester University, and with his academic career at the University of Liverpool. Alec Myers was born on 3 November 1912 in Wharfedale, and was taught for a career in the sciences at Huddersfield College. However, his interest in history proved so strong that he virtually prepared himself for the higher school certificate history as a main subject in a year. In 1931 he won the Hulme Hall Scholarship to Manchester University to read history, and in the course of holding this award for four years he gained a first class honours degree in history in 1934, the year in which he was awarded the Mark Hovell Book Prize as the best student of thirty-five candidates in the final examinations. Within fifteen months of registration for the M.A. degree at Manchester University he presented early in 1935 his thesis entitled: 'The Commons in the Parliaments of Henry V and the Minority of Henry VI'. A few months later began his service to the University of Liverpool, since in October he was appointed an assistant lecturer in the department of medieval history. Apart from war service in the Royal Navy as an intelligence officer, Alec Myers remained at Liverpool University until his death. He had become a lecturer in 1936, a senior lecturer in 1956 the same year in which he supplicated for his Ph.D. degrees at the University of London with a thesis: 'The Black Book of the Household of Edward IV and the Ordinance of 1478', which was published in 1959 by Manchester University Press. He became a reader in 1959 and in 1967 he succeeded Christopher Brooke to the chair. He reached the pinnacle of his university career in 1978 when he became an officer of the University as dean of the Faculty of Arts. He was due to retire from this burdensome office and from his chair at the end of September 1980.

Despite dedicated teaching and heavy administrative responsibilities, including serving as director of Combined Honours from 1964 to 1967, Alec Myers published widely, principally in the field of English history of the later Middle Ages. Indeed he made his reputation with his *History of England in the late Middle Ages*, the fourth volume of 'The Pelican History of England'. It first appeared in January 1952 and reached its ninth edition in 1976. His *English Historical Documents, 1327-1485*, which is Volume IV in the series edited by D. C. Douglas, was published in 1969. It is a monumental work that occupied him for over twenty years, and one that a scholar of the period ignores at his peril. It is particularly important for the wealth of material and insight that it provides on constitutional and administrative affairs, which remained the focus of Alec Myers's attention from the days of his M.A. thesis. His *Parliaments and Estates in Europe to 1789*, published in 1975, was his last major study. This work shows the

extension of his specialism to the continent and beyond the medieval period. A foretaste of this appeared in an important paper that he had given to the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions. This paper entitled: 'The English Parliament and the French Estates-General in the Middle Ages' was published in *Album Helen Cam* in 1961. The bulk of his scholarly articles appeared in *English Historical Review*, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, *University of Toronto Law Journal*, and *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*. His scholarship brought him recognition, though generally it has been undervalued, perhaps because he himself was modest of his achievements and in no way trendy. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 1939, and ten years later elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He was a member of the Council of the Royal Historical Society, 1970-74, and held the office of President of the Historical Association of Great Britain from 1973-76. A volume of essays focused on the society and culture of later medieval England, dedicated to Alec Myers as a tribute by his colleagues and friends, and with a bibliography of his historical writings, hopefully will be published in 1981. It is a consolation that news of this volume, which was to mark his retirement, had reached him and brought him great pleasure.

Alec Myers was most expansive at home, and fortunate in a happy family life, which meant so much to him. A convert to the Anglican Church, he became a pillar of the Anglican community at Birkenhead, where he first resided, and for the past twenty years or so at West Kirby. His *The Story of the churches of West Kirby Parish* was written in order to raise funds for the restoration of St Bridget's Church, which was to mark the centenary of that Church's restoration in 1870. Such was the demand that in 1973 a second edition appeared and is still in print. Apart from being a distinguished medievalist and teacher closely associated with Lancashire and Cheshire, Alec Myers will be remembered particularly on the Wirral as exemplifying Christian ideals.

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