

= Robert Winchelsey =

Robert Winchelsey ( or Winchelsea ; c . 1245 ? 1313 ) was an English Christian theologian and Archbishop of Canterbury . He studied at the universities of Paris and Oxford , and later taught at both . Influenced by Thomas Aquinas , he was a scholastic theologian . Winchelsey held various benefices in England , and was the Chancellor of Oxford University before being elected to Canterbury in early 1293 . Although he initially had the support of Edward I , Winchelsey later became a forceful opponent of the king . The archbishop was encouraged by the papacy to resist Edward 's attempts to tax the clergy . Winchelsey was also an opponent of the king 's treasurer Walter Langton as well as other clergy . On one occasion he rebuked an abbot so sternly that the abbot suffered a fatal heart attack .

Following the election of a former royal clerk as Pope Clement V in 1305 , the king was able to secure the archbishop 's exile that same year . Upon the succession of Edward 's son , Edward II , Winchelsey was allowed to return to England after the new king petitioned the pope to allow his return . Winchelsey soon joined the king 's enemies , however , and was the only bishop to object to the return of the king 's favourite , Piers Gaveston . Winchelsey died in 1313 . Although miracles were alleged to have happened at his tomb , an attempt to have him declared a saint was unsuccessful .

= = Early life = =

Winchelsey studied and taught at the universities of Paris and Oxford , and became the Rector of Paris , and Chancellor of Oxford . While in Paris , he read , and possibly met , Thomas Aquinas , and his own theology was thereafter purely scholastic . In 1283 , he was appointed canon of St. Paul 's in London , but it is unclear exactly when he returned to England . He held the prebend of Oxgate in the diocese of London , and was made Archdeacon of Essex , also in the London diocese , in about 1288 .

= = Archbishop = =

= = = Election = = =

John Peckham , Archbishop of Canterbury , died in December 1292 , and on 13 February 1293 Winchelsey was elected as his successor . Unusually , neither the pope nor the king had a hand in his election . On 1 April Winchelsey left England for Rome to get papal confirmation . He was not consecrated immediately because of a papal vacancy ; Celestine V eventually performed the ceremony at Aquila on 12 September 1294 .

= = = Disputes with Edward I = = =

Winchelsey was a fearless opponent of Edward I. When he swore his oath of fealty to Edward , he offended the king by adding a declaration that he was only swearing fealty for the temporalities , not the spiritualities . All through his term as archbishop he refused to allow Edward to tax the clergy beyond certain levels , and withstood severe pressure to change his mind . In August 1295 , he offered the king a tenth of all ecclesiastical revenues , less than Edward had hoped to collect from the clergy . Winchelsey did concede though that if the war with France , which was what the money was requested to fund , continued into the following year , then the clergy would be amenable to making further contributions .

Following the issue of the papal bull Clericis laicos in 1296 , forbidding the payment of taxes to a secular power , Winchelsey urged his clergy in 1297 to refuse payments to Edward . However , the clergy of the province of York paid a tax of a fifth of their revenues . Edward then declared clerics who refused to pay outlaws , and ordered their property to be seized . He conceded that the clergy

could return to his protection if they paid a fine of a fifth of their revenues , exactly what the northern clergy had offered in the way of taxation . The royal clerks and many other clergy paid the fines , and in March , the southern clergy met again , and after a long debate , Winchelsey instructed each clerk to decide for himself whether or not to pay the fine . It appears that most chose to pay , but the archbishop still refused to make any contribution , and so Edward seized his lands . They were returned to him in July 1297 , when the king and prelate were reconciled at Westminster . Winchelsey then tried to mediate between Edward and the earls , who also objected to Edward 's tax demands .

Winchelsey further irritated Edward with his opposition to the Bishop of Lichfield , Walter Langton , who was the king 's treasurer . The king was not the only one to be upset by the archbishop ; the abbot of Oseney , in 1297 , was so affected by a rebuke from him that he suffered a fatal heart attack . In 1299 , Winchelsey and the king briefly reconciled , and the archbishop presided at the king 's second marriage , to Margaret of France , at Canterbury . Winchelsey vigorously asserted his authority over his suffragan , or subordinant bishops , quarrelled with Pope Boniface VIII over a Sussex living , and was excommunicated by one of the pope 's clerks in 1301 . He was absolved in 1302 .

= = = Exile and return = = =

Winchelsey and the barons joined in demanding reforms from the king at the parliament of Lincoln in 1301 , but Winchelsey 's support of Boniface VIII 's claim to be the protector of Scotland , broke the alliance . One of the reasons which led the archbishop to ally with the barons was his hostility to Edward 's adviser , Walter Langton , Bishop of Lichfield . The king took no action against Winchelsey until the Gascon and former royal clerk Bertrand de Got was named Pope Clement V in 1305 . Edward then sent two envoys ? Langton and Henry Lacy ? to the pope , to press his claim that Winchelsey was plotting against him . Clement suspended the archbishop on 12 February 1306 . Winchelsey left England and went to the papal court at Bordeaux , where he stayed until Edward 's death in July 1307 . Only Antony Bek , Bishop of Durham supported the archbishop .

After the death of Edward I , the new king , Edward II , asked that Winchelsey be restored , which the pope agreed to on 22 January 1308 . Soon after his return to England in early 1308 the archbishop joined the king 's enemies . The archbishop , along with the Earl of Warwick , were the only people to object to the return of the new king 's favourite Piers Gaveston to England in 1309 . Winchelsey aided the barons in their prosecution of Edward II by sentencing their enemies to excommunication . He was appointed an Ordainer in 1310 , and died at Otford on 11 May 1313 .

= = Legacy = =

Winchelsey was a preacher of some note , and when preaching at St. Paul 's he attracted large crowds to his sermons and lectures . Winchelsey 's theological writings date primarily from his time at St. Paul 's , where he delivered a number of quodibeta . The quaestiones disputatae from those sessions survive , and illustrate his highly orthodox trinitarian views and his scholastic method . Miracles were said to have been worked at his tomb in Canterbury cathedral , but efforts to have him declared a saint were unsuccessful .