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James Whitelocke's *Liber Famelicus*, 1570 - 1632

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the life and times of Sir James Whitelocke (1570-1632), lawyer, MP and eventually Justice of King's Bench in the reign of James I and Charles I. It bases this investigation upon the *Liber Famelicus*, the diary in which Whitelocke compiled his own observations on the period. The first part of the thesis analyses the value of the *Liber Famelicus* as an historical commentary, and considers Whitelocke's professional and social formation during his legal training at the University of Oxford and the Inns of Court and Chancery between 1588 and 1620. The second part of the thesis considers the current historiographical debate on early Stuart politics for the period 1608-1632, and locates Whitelocke within this debate through an analysis of his association with the Society of Antiquaries, his parliamentary career, his involvement in court politics, and his role in political controversy as Justice of King's Bench. The third part of the thesis investigates Whitelocke's social and professional connections in the county community over the period in which he built up a legal practice (1600-1620), and during his four years as Chief Justice of Chester (1620-1624). The thesis concludes with an assessment of James Whitelocke's world-view, the strains placed on this world-view in the period 1570-1632, and Whitelocke's overall achievement in pre-civil war society.