

5. *Whitemoors* (p.359). I believe this to be a non-indigenous nomenclature. It nowhere appears in the early records of Shenton Parish. Was it invented by Hutton in the eighteenth century? In any event, it seems to correspond with the ancient 'Great Moor', a common waste between the wetlands in Shenton and Dadlington parishes.

Book Reviews

PRETENDERS. Jeremy Potter. 1986. Constable, London, £10.95.

This book, the author tells us, is intended to be a 'portrait gallery of losers; a record of those who failed to succeed'. In his introduction he goes on to draw a distinction between a pretender and any candidate for a throne, and to list the successful pretender's requisites, among which good luck was paramount. The list is a daunting one. Not suprisingly, the record of these pretenders is poor. Yet Mr. Potter is able to point to one notable exception — Henry Tudor.

In nine chapters the reader is given more than mere 'portraits' of a decidedly mixed bag of pretenders male and female. More than eight centuries are spanned, beginning with the valiant crusader, Robert of Normandy, and ending with 'Henry IX', the last of 'those comic frauds', the Sobieski Stuarts. These two men were alike in their longevity (each living for more than eighty years), but in little else. To pay for his crusade, Robert was forced to pledge his duchy, and his last twenty-eight years were spent in prison. Henry's youth was free from want, his 'turn' as a soldier was brief, and for the last sixty years of his life he was a wealthy prince of the church. Few of Mr. Potter's pretenders were as fortunate.

In the first paragraph of the first chapter, the author opines that, while Simnel and Warbeck are familiar to schoolchildren, few will have heard of Robert of Normandy, or of his son, William Clito. His optimism is perhaps excessive. Should this book come into their hands, the benighted young might well be tempted to learn, so readable and persuasive is the author. He is also very informative. Here a note of caution must be sounded. There are doubtful statements. An early example occurs on pages 22-3. We are told that Robert of Normandy, on the pretext of protecting Laodicea (then and now Lattekieh), withdrew from the hardships of the siege of Antioch, and that only the threat of excommunication forced him to return. Present at the taking of Antioch, he held a command in the army which defeated 'an enemy relief force'. This seems less than fair. Antioch fell on 3 June 1098. Lattekieh had been taken in the previous autumn by the piratical Guynemer of Boulogne. In March 1098 a fleet commanded by the Englishman, Edgar Atheling, ejected Guynemer's men and held the town for the Emperor Alexius. With few men to spare for a garrison he appealed to the Crusading army for assistance. Soon after the defeat (on 28 June) of the 'relief force', Robert answered his friend's appeal. He held the town for Alexius, but not long. His exactions made his rule unpopular, and he was forced to retire from Lattekieh, which was given a Byzantine garrison. This is the version chosen by the late Sir Steven Runciman, and it is convincing.

We might have been told more about Edgar Atheling, who is listed as a pretender in the Introduction. His fleet was manned by Englishmen, and although he served the Emperor, he gave the Crusaders valuable assistance. As Regent of Scotland (1087-1100), he displayed considerable ability. He fought for Robert at Tinchebrai, was pardoned by Henry I and lived — apparently in obscurity — until extreme old age. Mr Potter seems to have a down on Henry I, and on the chroniclers and historians who 'make light of' that King's faithlessness, licentiousness and cruelty. Henry's subjects, however, came to see him as 'the Lion of Justice', and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that 'a good man he was and there was much dread of him. No man durst do wrong with another in his time.' A dread sovereign his successor was not. The author provides an excellent account of the often ferocious struggle between Henry's daughter, Matilda, and his nephew, Stephen — 'a mild man, and soft, and good', who executed no justice. Manfully, he attempts to explain the fatal defects of Matilda's character. Some of her mistakes remind one of those of another lady of Anjou, Margaret, the Lancastrian Bellona.

A lengthy chapter is devoted to our monarchy's Jesse, John of Gaunt, pretender to a foreign throne. The author appears to follow Froissart when describing the battle of Najera. If so, it is odd that the defeated, not (as in Froissart) the Black Prince's victorious following, are called *la fleur de toute la chevalerie dumonde*. Indeed, Sir John Chandos (who is without a monument in his own country) was regarded as 'the flower of all chivalry'. No matter, we are given good value. Let us return to pretenders and impostors.

As one would expect, in chapter four, 'Yorkists, Lancastrians and Henry Tudor', Mr. Potter's touch is sure. Yet the chapter is brief and the matter is compressed. The author sweeps around those impostors employed in early conspiracies against the usurping Henry IV. The priest Richard Magdalen (or Maudelyn), seems to have been the bastard son of the Black Prince's wife, Joan, the 'Fair Maid of Kent'. Richard, Earl of Cambridge (grandfather of Richard III — and grandson of Pedro the Cruel, on whose behalf the English fought at Najera), is said to have intended to bring Hotspur's son out of Scotland, together with another impersonator of Richard II, Thomas de Trumpyngton. For supporting such a report, the Black Prince's bastard, Sir Roger de Clarendon, was 'hang'd up, together with eight Monks, and a Doctor of Divinity'. Clarendon (who fought at Najera) was the child of Edith de Wellesford. We are reminded of Ralph Wiford, or Wilsford (Wuford to Mr. Potter), hanged as a false Warwick by Henry VII in 1499.

Simnel and Warbeck are more thoroughly examined. The author misses little. When discussing the validity of Warbeck's claim, he introduces as a Warbeck 'supporter' the charming creator of *Frankenstein*, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Sadly, the de la Poles are dealt with rather briskly in the opening paragraphs of chapter seven, 'Queen Jane'. Of Jane Grey the author writes with sympathy, for clearly he is a man of heart. He is fair to the Queen of Scots and perhaps more than fair to Monmouth, and he gives us all we require about the Stuarts. All is elegantly summed up in an excellent and witty Conclusion.

Mr. Potter provides a select bibliography and sources and references. There are more illustrations than one might expect in a book so modestly

priced, plus five genealogical trees, and he provides plenty of food for thought — and for argument. Let us hope that he has something as good on the stocks.

W. E. HAMPTON

WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL LIFE. Margaret Wade Labarge. 1986. Hamish Hamilton, £14.95.

The profusion of books on medieval women by women may lead one to sympathise with the medieval Dominican Robert Holcot's view 'that it is a matter of astonishment that women who have fewer teeth than men should yet have not less to say than men, but a good deal more!' There are three problems with present historiography of medieval women. Firstly, an often present, unhelpful and anachronistic 'feminist' overtone in most studies; secondly that very little new evidence is being used and thirdly that as a result dependence on the overstretched famous examples is rendering these a little tired. Queens invariably lead to discussions of Eleanor of Aquitaine; nuns to Heloise; writers to Christine de Pisan; mystics to Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe; and heretics to Joan of Arc.

As a good general survey of medieval women Margaret Wade Labarge's new book is a pleasing and useful volume but adds nothing to present knowledge of the subject. It is a hierarchical study, in the best medieval tradition, beginning with queens and working down the scale to such social outcasts as prostitutes and witches. Though it follows the mould of the middle ages there is more than a hint of dismay at the inequality between men and women.

Like many other historians Wade Labarge follows the notion that women were better off before 1100, enjoying greater freedom and respect than their successors. The argument rests on uncertain foundations and some of Labarge's own examples seem open to challenge. Women's ability to bear children was surely as highly prized in the early period as in the later (p.1)? The comment of Tacitus on the German attitude that married women shall 'share a man's toils and dangers, that she is to be his partner in all his sufferings and adventures', is as true of his own first century as of the fifteenth. Just as 'Barbarians expected their women to be active and capable', so too did civilised medieval man (p.2). Regencies were not the exclusive activity of early queens (p.3) as the later example of someone of the calibre of Blanche of Castile (pp.52-5) makes clear. That greater organisation moved the queen and noblewoman from positions of influence making them figures of ceremony rather than power is readily refuted.

Wade Labarge rightly starts with some helpful discussion of the female population, the longevity of women; and the social status which determined their lifestyles. The comparison between the maturing process of men and women seems both prejudiced and oversimplified: 'men could see their lifespan as a clear progression . . . the pattern was far more complex for women' (p.26-7). In reality *both* sexes were powerless in their infancy; *both* experienced a training period, though of differing kinds, in their youth; and *both* were very often married off without any consultation or consideration as to feelings. It seems common for this last point always to be emphasised as a symbol of female

subjection when in fact it was something which affected both parties. *If* such unions were traumatic for women then they must have been equally so for a similarly aged groom suddenly burdened with the duty of maintaining a wife. Who is to say that the little Duchess Anne Mowbray 'suffered' more than the young Richard of York when they were married in 1478? The notion too that women were under 'total domination' once married is a theory quite clearly not borne out by practice. The probability is that marriage improved a woman's freedom of action, giving her responsibilities and some standing. Whatever the rule of law may have dictated, in practice, it would be hard to argue that women such as Margaret Paston or Lady Margaret Beaufort lived in total subjection to their husbands.

Before launching into the main arena of her work Wade Labarge draws attention to some of the better known treatises of instruction for women that have survived. The conclusion that Christine de Pisan wrote extensively about widowhood in the *Treasure of the City of Ladies* because of a premonition that the dedicatee, Margaret of Burgundy, would be widowed early seems unnecessarily contrived in the face of the obvious — Pisan's own experience as a widow herself from the age of twenty-five.

Starting at the top of the social ladder a chapter on queens deals exclusively with the spouses of English and French monarchs from 1100 to 1500 with an assessment of their childbearing capacity and their political contribution. Few with an interest in the fifteenth century would accept the view that 'queens did not have to struggle for the rights of their sons' once primogeniture became the norm (p.44) cf. Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville — but in general the examples chosen bear out the conclusion that medieval queens were varied personalities who often exercised considerable power. A similar conclusion about noble women, that many lived active lives and held their own in society, is drawn from an examination of some well known figures — Adela of Blois, Isabel de Fortibus, Lady Elizabeth de Burgh and Mary St. Pol, Countess of Pembroke — and less familiar ladies, such as Ermengarde of Narbonne, Nichola de la Haye and Marguerite of Flanders.

Succeeding chapters follow the pattern: reference to specific examples to shed light on the role and activities of nuns, beguines, recluses, mystics, townswomen, peasants, nurses, prostitutes and female felons, dancers, artists and singers. There are some good stories — the widowed countesses turned recluses, Loretta and Annora de Braose; Jacqueline de Felicie defending her healing practice before the faculty of medicine in Paris and the garrulous sister Perronette de Vertjus from the Hôtel Dieu only controlled by a spell of solitary confinement and a week on bread and water. And there are some good illustrations — Blanche of Castile instructing Louis IX, a peasant woman shearing sheep; women gardening, selling poultry, collecting eggs and playing music, these last the best testimony to the activities of medieval women. This is a comprehensive study that will provide a useful starting point to the general reader and some guidance to the potential specialist.

ROWENA E. ARCHER

THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES, 1200-1550. Trevor Rowley. 1986. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. £17.95.

This book is the second of a five volume series having as its theme the interaction of man and the British Landscape. The study necessarily relies upon the surviving evidence of that interaction in the form of archaeological artefacts, buildings and the present landscape itself to supplement the written record. Trevor Rowley begins his commentary in the late twelfth century and discusses life in Britain right through to the middle of the sixteenth century when the dissolution of the monasteries was complete and the state reigned supreme.

The informative text is interspersed on most pages with photographs, diagrams or maps. There are over seventy photographic plates, some sixty figures and a number of tables, all of which add considerable interest to the subjects discussed by the author. These range from illustrations from medieval chronicles and manuscripts through to maps and plans from record offices and photographs of many surviving medieval buildings and remains of villages. Included in the tables is a useful list of all the town plans which Speed included in his *Theatre of Great Britain* which was published in 1614.

The series is aimed at a wide readership and there is much to interest scholars of history as well as those who list the origins of our environment amongst their hobbies. The book provides an ideal starting point for those who would like to find out more but are not quite sure just where to start.

The book includes a comprehensive account of woodland forests and parks which existed in medieval times and we learn that by the beginning of the fourteenth century there were as many as 3,200 parks in England, with the county of Stafford containing no less than ninety-four within its shire boundaries. In addition to featuring the landscape of Britain the author also discusses industry, trade and communications and it is interesting to note that coal, as well as iron and tin was mined on a small scale throughout the late Middle Ages, from Gloucester northwards, although there is little evidence of it being transported beyond the immediate vicinity.

In the chapter entitled 'Kings, Castles and House of the Great' the author's enthusiasm for our magnificent medieval heritage is evidenced by the many photographs, plans and references which give a broad picture of their place in the landscape. He deals briefly with the Norman origins of fortification and then proceeds to the later Middle Ages when the needs of successive kings inevitably changed and the effect this had on both royal castles and the wealthy land-owning nobles.

No study of this period can be complete without reference to the effects of the Black Death which first manifested itself in the middle of the fourteenth century and was followed by further major outbreaks at approximately ten year intervals for the next three decades. The author estimates that by 1300 the level of population could have been as high as five million, with the highest density being in the east of the country and generally thinning out towards the west, where considerable areas of woodland and marshland were largely uncultivated. However a century later it would appear that the population may have been reduced by some 35-45% as a result of the successive plague outbreaks to which children in particular were very vulnerable and it was not until towards the middle of the fifteenth century that both agriculture and trade began to recover.

Of the fifteenth century, the author makes an observation with which Ricardians will agree, that this period 'has always been an awkward one for historians, largely because the documentary evidence is far less satisfactory than for the centuries on either side'. He then goes on to refute the popular belief that this was a period of decline by discussing the extent of new building, both religious and secular. He also expresses his fears for the ever-changing landscape in England when he says that 'traces of the buildings and landscape of the Middle Ages still provide us with a rich historical document . . . It is however a record which is diminishing each year and if the pace of destruction continues at its present rate, ours will be the last generation privileged to see these works, except in isolated pockets'.

If classification is necessary, then Trevor Rowley's book is a textbook and it will no doubt become required reading in the sixth form and university courses, although its cost may preclude students from owning individual copies. As such it bridges the gap between superficial and in-depth reading — a digest of many research papers worked into a broad picture. Let this not discourage the volunteer reader. The author's style is enjoyable and generally he has avoided the boredom of reworking old material on topics such as 'economic trends' and 'deserted settlements' by making use of the most stimulating results of recent research in each section he reviews. Many readers of this *Journal* as amateur historians have only time for a narrow field of concentrated study. Trevor Rowley's book provides them with a pleasant opportunity to acquire a broader background with minimum effort.

PATRICIA HAIRSIINE

EXCOMMUNICATION IN THE MIDDLE AGES. Elisabeth Vodola. University of California Press, 1986. £29.95.

Excommunication was the ultimate spiritual sanction. Accompanied by public ritual cursing, the sentence drove the sinner from the community, depriving him of all social contacts, spiritual comforts and legal rights. During centuries when the provision of food and shelter depended upon group effort this casting out was, potentially, a death sentence. Such was the theory, at least, and such is the perception of most students of medieval history today, but it is the merit of Dr. Vodola's learned book that it shows us how crude, and thus inaccurate, this picture is. Her work forces three conclusions upon the reader: no aspect of excommunication was simple; almost no aspect was free from disagreement and debate; the operation of the practice was not static but for centuries (Dr. Vodola draws most of her material from before 1300) was undergoing change.

Excommunication was a powerful ecclesiastical weapon; so powerful, indeed, that its rigid application could lead, and often did, to absurdity, abuse and injustice. It was against these that popes, church councils and academic canon lawyers — these groups were not mutually exclusive — laboured so diligently. They did not work in a vacuum; for examples, the widespread heresies of the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries led to harsher rulings against excommunicates. Increasing defiance of the sentence led to calls for

reform, from the later-thirteenth century onwards, but nothing was achieved and excommunication remained a grievance into the reformation period.

This is an important book. The text, though periodically almost submerged in extensive Latin footnotes, is lucid and elegant. Surprisingly, the story has a hero: Innocent IV (Pope, 1243-1254), whose political role has earned considerable censure, emerges from this study as an outstandingly humane and sensitive man whom Dr. Vodola considers to have been 'the foremost theorist of medieval canon law'.

A. K. MCHARDY

Notices of Books and Articles

The following list consists of recent books and articles, mainly published in the last twelve months, although earlier publications may be included. The appearance of an item does not preclude its subsequent review. Items marked by an asterisk are in the Society's Library.

BOOKS

Julia Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*. 1986. 232 pages. D. S. Brewer, Woodbridge, Suffolk, £29.50.

Analysis of love-lyrics of a courtly nature written down 1400 to 1530. Examines authorship and composition, readers and owners.

Gothic and Renaissance Art in Nuremburg 1300-1550. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremburg, Prestel Verlag. (U.K.: Lund-Humphries). 499 pages. 1986. £35.50.

The catalogue of an exhibition of works of art from the 'Golden Age' of Nuremburg. Splendidly illustrated, with scholarly introductions.

Robert S. Gottfried, *Doctors and Medicine in Medieval England 1340-1530*. 1986. 359 pages. Princeton University Press. £30.

To be used with caution

Rosemary Horrox (ed.), *Richard III and the North*. 129 pages. 1986. University of Hull Publications. £4.95 (inc. postage). From Publications Officer, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Hull, 49 Salmon Grove, Hull, HU6 7SZ.

Papers by Michael Hicks, Michael Jones, David Palliser, Rosemary Horrox and Pamela Tudor-Craig.

Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge 1200-1500*. 1987. 384 pages. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Fourth Series 4. Cambridge University Press, £30.

How a medieval society organised relief of the poor, and why there was a need for that relief.

Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons in Medieval England*. 375 pages. Illustrated. 1985. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Detailed study of this phenomena from 1100 to the Reformation: the reciprocal benefits of the anchorite and the community which supported him, or more usually, her; the role of the bishops and the financial support of cells; the literature and rules; an analysis of lay supporters from the king downwards including details of the Scrope and Beauchamp families in the fifteenth century and the testators of London and York.

ARTICLES

C. Paul Christianson, Early London Bookbinders and Parchmeners, *The Book Collector*, volume 34, 1985, pages 41-54.

The organisation of the book trade in fourteenth and fifteenth century London as shown by the crafts of the bookbinder and the parchment maker. Details of their business associations, premises and activities.

M. A. Hicks, Counting the Cost of War: The Moleyns, Ransom and the Hungerford Land Sales 1453-87, *Southern History*, volume 8, 1986, pages 11-31.

Margaret, heiress of the third Lord Botreaux, wife of the second Lord Hungerford and mother of the Lord Moleyns who required ransom from the French, is the central figure of this study. How she managed in her widowhood 1459-79, to pay the ransom, support herself and her dependants, carry out the bequests of her deceased husband and his father and pay their debts, as piety dictated. She left a detailed account of her expenditure attached to her will of 1476. Assessment of the losses to the Hungerford family caused by foreign and civil war.

Anne F. Sutton, William Shore, Merchant of London and Derby, *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, volume 106, 1986, pages 127-139.

Biography of the divorced husband of Elizabeth Shore, mistress of Edward IV. His business contacts spread from Derby to Essex, London and the Low Countries. Related to the Agards of Derbyshire. Text of his will in full and illustration of his tomb.*

Notes on Contributors

Rowena E. Archer has recently completed a D.Phil. thesis at Oxford on the Mowbray Dukes of Norfolk up to 1432. Currently researching the later Mowbray Dukes.

Keith Dockray, Member of the Society. Senior Lecturer in History at The Polytechnic, Huddersfield.

Peter J. Foss is currently completing a Ph.D. for the University of Wales. He is the author of *The History of Market Bosworth (1983)*, and of a forthcoming book on the The Battle of Bosworth.

Patricia Hairsine, Member since 1973. Author of articles in *Richard III, Crown and People*. Preparing editions of the Exchequer Warrants for Issues 1480-85 and fifteenth century Customs Accounts for Poole, Dorset.

P. W. Hammond, Research Officer of the Society. Co-editor of *The Coronation of Richard III*.

William E. Hampton, educated USA and England, B.A. Dunelm. Author of *Memorials of the Wars of the Roses*.

A. K. McHardy is a Lecturer in the History Department, Aberdeen University. Her research centres on the late-medieval English church, and she is general editor of the Canterbury and York Society.

Contributions to the Ricardian

These are welcomed on any subject relevant to the aims of the Society. These may be illustrated by photographs (glossy prints showing good contrast) or by line drawings. All contributions, including letters, must be typewritten, with double spacing and adequate margins, on one side of the paper only. Permission must be obtained for the use of copyright material, but this is not usually necessary for short quotes. References and footnotes must be given in one sequence at the end of the article. Details need not be given in full for second and subsequent references to the same source. They must take the form of the following examples:

R. Horrox and P. W. Hammond (eds.), *British Library Manuscript 433* (4 vols. Upminster and London 1979-83), vol. 1, pp.45-6.

Daniel Williams, The hastily drawn up will of William Catesby Esquire, 25 August 1485, *Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*, vol. 51 (1975-6), p.48.

Anyone interested in taking display advertisement space — full, half or quarter page — or in placing an insert should contact the Editor. (Classified advertisements should be sent to the Editor of the Bulletin).

Contributions for the December 1987 *Ricardian* must reach Miss Anne Sutton, 17 Enfield Cloisters, Fanshaw Street, London N1 6LD, by September 30. Articles should be sent well in advance. Further advice on presentation may be obtained from the Editor.

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