

Book Reviews

THE BATTLE OF STOKE FIELD. David E. Roberts. Newark & Sherwood District Council, 1987. 70 pages. £2.70.

THE SECRET BATTLE. Alan Wilkinson. Midas of Nottingham, 1987. 84 pages. £7.50.

A POCKET HISTORY OF EAST STOKE. Frank A. A. Cotton. Newark & Sherwood District Council, 1987. 23 pages. £1.25.

THE BATTLE OF EAST STOKE 1487. M. W. Bishop. Nottinghamshire County Council, 1987. 18 pages. 75p.

LAMBERT SIMNEL AND THE BATTLE OF STOKE. Michael Bennett. Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., Gloucester, 1987. 157 pages. £14.95.

The quinqucentenary of the Battle of Stoke-by-Newark has been commemorated by a full length study by Dr. Michael Bennett of the University of Tasmania and by several booklets written by historians resident in the locality. Dr. Bennett naturally paints the story of this, the most serious rebellion against Henry VII, on the broadest canvas, but the authors of the booklets display an intimate knowledge of the topography of the region which makes their contributions complementary rather than subsidiary to the longer book.

David Roberts' *The Battle of Stoke Field* is a closely argued and profusely illustrated booklet, commissioned as part of the commemorative programme arranged by a committee of the villagers of East Stoke. Mr. Roberts has made a careful study of both contemporary and more recent accounts of the engagement and has sought to clarify the King's movements by reference to the unpublished accounts of the royal household: but his conclusions have led him to accept the scenario suggested by the writings of Polydore Vergil, that Henry Tudor marched to Newark on the day preceding the battle and then retraced his footsteps southwards (towards Stoke village) so that he approached the rebel army from the north. The main objection to this theory is that the herald who accompanied the royal forces states specifically that the King spent the night of Friday 15 June near Radcliffe, some 10 miles south of the battlefield, but this Mr. Roberts dismisses as a 'lapse of memory' on the part of the unidentified author when he subsequently prepared his report. But Vergil, who may have thought that Stoke village lay to the north of Newark, was writing some twenty years after the events he was describing, and it is hard to believe that Henry was so poorly served with intelligence as to his enemy's whereabouts that he marched his army frantically backwards and forwards, a view endorsed by Edward Hall's comment that the King 'was in hys (Lincoln's) bosome and knewe every houre what the Erle did'.

Alan Wilkinson has written an unashamedly popular history of the Simnel rebellion, one which gives free rein to the imagination by putting speeches into the mouths of the leading participants and in furnishing such details as the chroniclers' left unsaid. His approach is particularly effective in his vivid

account of the battle, but is sometimes marred by comments which are either simplistic or unnecessary: it is most unlikely, for example, that the plot was ever 'all a giggle, really', and we could take it for granted that the encamping Yorkists 'loosened their codpieces' and 'irrigated' Bramham Moor. Mr. Wilkinson contributes the interesting suggestion (derived from his knowledge of local tradition) that the rebel forces made their way from Piel Castle into Lancashire through underground passages, a device which allowed them to emerge several miles to the rear of any Tudor forces guarding the coastline; but the burden of his argument, that the considerable support which, he believes, the rebels found in England was minimised by the Tudors as a matter of policy (hence the title), has only a slight basis in fact.

Frank Cotton has written a thematic history of Stoke village, one designed (as he readily admits) to appeal primarily to those who have neither the time nor the inclination to study the subject in detail, but which is entertaining and informative nevertheless. Mr. Cotton deals with the origins of the village, the Roman occupation, the medieval Hospital of St. Leonard, the church (where he recognises that the scarred stonework may owe as much to generations of cemetery-keepers as to John of Lincoln's billmen), and, of course, the battle, and finds space for chapters on 'noteworthy persons' and the preservation of the parish registers. His booklet is an excellent way to approach the history of the village, and the same may be said of M. W. Bishop's account of the battle, which although by far the shortest of the several alternatives, is eminently readable, and has the great merit of presenting the evidence in a simple yet scholarly way. Mr. Bishop supports his statements with very full references, and his summary can be recommended to those who, again, have only limited time at their disposal, or who would like to familiarise themselves with the outline (and not a little of the detail) of the rebellion before grappling with the contentions of the longer books.

Dr. Michael Bennett's *Lambert Simnel and the Battle of Stoke* is conceived on the lines of his well-known study of the Battle of Bosworth, and includes a general survey of the Wars of the Roses (explained in terms of the life of the Yorkist matriarch, Duchess Cecily), a valuable appendix of extracts from sources (some of which have not previously appeared in translation), and chapters which investigate the origins and recount the course of the rebellion and assess the aftermath. Dr. Bennett has utilised little-known works (notably the *Chroniques de Jersey* which illuminate the career of Richard Harleston, the former governor of the island turned rebel), and has checked the originals of the standard printed sources, an exercise which has led him to discover what is not apparent from Leland's transcript of the Tudor herald's report of the rebellion, that the boy known to History as Lambert Simnel was at one point in his life called John. The implication is clearly that the unusual name was itself a pseudonym, and Dr. Bennett adds to the mystery by suggesting that there may have been two priests called Simons, a William, who at the beginning of 1487 confessed in convocation that he had taken Simnel to Ireland, and a Richard, who was captured with his protégé after Stoke. But questions are more easily raised than answered, and in spite of his considerable efforts to uncover 'new' material Dr. Bennett is still obliged to rely mainly on the traditional — and often contradictory — accounts of the Herald, Molinet and Vergil, accounts

which leave him 'for the most part . . . crawling on the ground, groping in the gloom for safe footholds, and exploring every nook and cranny for possible leads.' This paucity of firm evidence may have been instrumental in dissuading earlier writers from attempting a full-length study of the rebellion, and they would certainly have been influenced by the consideration that Stoke, unlike Bosworth, changed nothing. Dr. Bennett argues forcefully that the crisis helped Henry Tudor 'assess the quality of his ministers and servants', and, further, that the campaign caused him to 'establish constructive relations with the leaders of many local communities' and shaped his approach to the problems of finance, law-enforcement, and administration: but it is surely likely that these developments would have taken place anyway given time, Henry's long experience of adversity, and the continuing unrest.

The book is tastefully and profusely illustrated and contains some valuable analysis, most notably Dr. Bennett's discussion of the practical difficulties which would have confronted the Yorkist leaders in forging their 'mongrel' English, Irish and Continental forces into a unified army. Their weaponry and tactics were hardly compatible, and although Martin Schwarz, the mercenary captain, was a seasoned warrior, Lincoln and his principal lieutenants had only limited experience of combat, and then rarely from positions of command. This last point cannot be disputed, but Dr. Bennett might have added that, with one or two notable exceptions, Henry Tudor and his officers had similarly grown to maturity in the years since Tewkesbury and knew no more of warfare at first hand. It is, perhaps, one of the disappointments of the book that there is no in-depth discussion of the loyalties and connections of the 150 and more peers, knights, and gentlemen who are known to have fought in the battle, and readers of the local booklets may be surprised that Dr. Bennett does not consider the possibility that the Earl of Lincoln might, very reasonably, have crossed the Trent at any one of three places other than Fiskerton, or justify his acceptance of the traditional location of the battlefield to the south-west of Stoke. But it would be wrong to give the impression that the work is materially flawed by what are essentially differences of emphasis: on the contrary it is well and interestingly written and will deservedly become the standard account of the rebellion until we are somewhat closer to A.D. 2487.

DAVID BALDWIN

HISTORIC DOUBTS ON THE LIFE AND REIGN OF KING RICHARD THE THIRD. Horace Walpole. With an introduction and notes by P. W. Hammond. 1987. Alan Sutton, Gloucester, £5.95 (paperback).

Historic Doubts will always remain a landmark in Ricardian historiography and, although challenged by Misses Halstead and Tey and Messrs. Markham and Kendall, the primacy of Walpole's claim to the crown of revisionism is unlikely to be usurped. The issues which he raised more than two centuries ago about Richard III and his Supposed Crimes — many of which seemed to Walpole 'improbable, and what was stronger, contrary to his interest' — go to the heart of the controversy and are still pertinent today.

Did Richard really murder the Lancastrian Prince of Wales, King Henry VI, the Duke of Clarence, Edward V, the young Duke of York and Queen Anne, his own wife? Were his executions of Hastings and of Rivers, Grey and Vaughan murders? Did he intend to commit incest with his niece Elizabeth? Was he unjust and cruel to the comely Mistress Shore? Was he really physically deformed? Was Edward IV really pre-contracted and Richard therefore genuinely the rightful heir to the throne? Is Sir Thomas More to be believed? Was Perkin Warbeck one of the missing princes, as he claimed to be? Walpole not only explores all these questions; he exposes other critical issues, such as the lack of evidence that Richard had designs upon the crown before the Woodvilles took to arms to deny him the protectorship bequeathed by his brother.

Historic Doubts was begun early in 1767 and completed after the author's return from a trip to Paris in October. It was published on 1 February 1768, in an edition of 1200 copies, by James Dodsley, who had bought the copyright for £100. Success was instantaneous. A second printing was called for on the day after publication and a thousand more copies were issued the following week. 'Horry seemed mightily pleased with the success which his new book has met with', wrote his friend, George Selwyn: 'nobody cavils at anything, but here and there an expression; his hypothesis is approved of from the most reasonable conjectures and the most indisputable authorities'.

The euphoria was not to last. Despite its virtues as a polemic and the sharp focus of the prose, *Historic Doubts* was conceived in error. It was inspired by a discovery which Walpole believed to be 'one of the most marvellous ever made'. This was what he took to be a Coronation Roll proving that Edward V had attended Richard III's coronation, but which was in fact a Great Wardrobe account proving no such thing. Those whom the book offended were soon pointing to the error and using it to denigrate the whole work.

In the preface historians are charged with incompetence, ignorance and misrepresentation. They are denounced as 'imposters', who have told 'interested lies', committed 'palpable forgeries' and 'laid waste truth'. Later they are accused of partiality, absurdities, contradictions and falsehoods, of being ridiculous and incoherent and of perpetrating 'a load of rubbish'. The picture of Richard III drawn by historians was 'a character formed by prejudice and invention'. Thomas More was 'capable of employing truth only as cement in a fabric of fiction'. Of his account of the murder of the princes Walpole wrote: 'It is difficult to crowd more improbabilities and lies together than are comprehended in this short narrative'. The revenge of the historians of the day was therefore sweet. David Hume, William Guthrie and others relished finding fault with Walpole's own history, and he reacted bitterly with long, crushing replies, most of which were, however, not published until his Complete Works appeared thirty years later.

Voltaire, who had cadged a free copy, wrote politely that, although he would like to believe that Richard had been neither as ugly nor as wicked as he was said to be, he had found reading the history of York and Lancaster rather like reading about highwaymen. This was a view from which Walpole did not dissent. In parrying the opposition he became ambivalent about his hero. Years after publication he was still, on the one hand, declaring stoutly that he would

not recant, would not give up the only king he had ever defended, while, on the other, hedging with remarks like 'I did call my work nothing but *Doubts*' and 'I have no doubt of Richard being a bad man'. He grew at pains to emphasise that he was not so much *for* Richard as *against* historians.

However that may be, Walpole mounted a defence which makes exhilarating reading and precipitated 'a monster or not a monster' arguments round all the best dining tables in London. If there had been a Richard III Society in the eighteenth century there can be little doubt that he would have been elected President with acclamation.

Walpole's belief that Perkin Warbeck was indeed Richard, Duke of York has not been generally accepted since James Gairdner argued the contrary view in the following century. But because Warbeck is said to have accused Richard III (not Henry VII, as might have been supposed) of the murder of Edward V, his real identity can have little bearing on Richard's reputation — unless, that is, a discovery in Scottish or Spanish archives were to give the lie to the Tudor version of Warbeck's 'utterly incredible' story of his escape. For, as Walpole noted: 'We do not know but from Henry's narrative and the Lancastrian historians that Perkin gave this account'.

It ought perhaps to have been noted in this edition that Walpole was wrongly informed about the burial place of Warbeck's widow, Lady Catherine Gordon. She was not buried in Swansea church beside her third husband, Sir Matthew Cradock, as the inscription on his tomb states, but beside her fourth, Christopher Ashton, at Fyfield, Oxon (formerly Berkshire).

Historic Doubts should be on the bookshelves of every member of the Richard III Society, and Peter Hammond, its Research Officer, has rendered the Society yet another service in bringing it back into print. He has provided not merely a reprint with introduction and notes, but (as his publishers fail to point out) a third edition — which the author himself intended but confessed himself 'too indolent to put my intention into practice'. This is the only corrected edition and the only one to include the Supplement of replies to critics, his separate replies to the Dean of Exeter and the Rev. Mr. Masters ('the most exemplary fathers of the church have not always been the best logicians') and the Wavering Postscript of 1793.

JEREMY POTTER

A NEW DICTIONARY OF HERALDRY. Stephen Friar. 1987. Alphabooks, Sherborne, Dorset. £15.95.

Heraldry, by its very nature, has always tended to generate books. The need arose originally of course from the requirement by heralds to codify and list the coats of arms of the knights and lords with whom they had to deal, thus producing the Rolls of Arms. One of the first textbooks of heraldry, in English at least, was the *Book of St. Albans*, by Dame Juliana Berners, written late in the fourteenth century, and the flood has continued unabated ever since. Many, if not most, are textbooks describing the charges and how they are used, and discussing heraldry in its many and varied aspects in a systematic manner. Others are lists of the coats of arms of different families, but since the number of

different charges used in heraldry is immense (and growing), a very large group of books are the heraldic dictionaries. These list the various charges, describe them and illustrate most, if not all. We thus come to the present book. This is titled a *Dictionary* (i.e. a book listing words with their meanings), but is in fact more of an encyclopaedia (a book of classified information on a branch of knowledge). This, to me, is slightly disappointing, since our current major gap in heraldry books is a comprehensive dictionary, which is what I hoped this would be. Not, I hasten to add, that this is a bad book. It is just not the book which the title promises.

So, what in fact does this book contain? As indicated, it is in fact an encyclopaedia of heraldry, combined with a dictionary. There are brief articles on the charges, with definitions, and useful comments on their use, and there are longer articles on such topics as the College of Arms, Heralds, and general heraldic topics, such as marshalling of arms. There are also articles on other topics of less direct relevance, such as brasses, and the arms which may be found thereon, and the heraldry of the Wars of the Roses, and yet others on topics of even less relevance, such as the Master of the Horse and the peerage. It is true that the latter are interesting and indeed useful (one of these is a discussion of the teaching of heraldry in schools), and as with all articles in the book they are written by foremost authorities. They do not however seem really to deserve a place in what is not after all a large book. If they had been omitted, and after all there are other books dealing with these topics, space might have been found for small line drawings of some of the less well known charges. Some of the more unusual attitudes in which beasts are found for example, such as the tricorporate lion would be better dealt with in a picture rather than merely by saying that it is 'three beasts pallwise sharing the same head', and the stranger monsters, such as the 'enfield' would surely be better depicted than described (it has the head of a fox, chest of a greyhound, talons of an eagle as forefeet and the hindquarters of a wolf). One other slightly odd feature of this book is the eccentric use of the main headings 'Attribute' and 'Attitude' for beasts. This in itself is sensible enough, collecting them all together, but not without a cross reference from, for example, 'Lion' under which no reference is found to the many positions in which lions have been drawn.

That the lack of more line drawings is indeed a loss is seen from those which are present, for example the splendid drawings of lions accompanying the article on the attributes of beasts. Unlike the provision of line drawings however it is only possible to praise the provision and style of the many coloured illustrations. These range from colour photographs of recent grants of arms, showing the different styles, to reproductions of coloured manuscripts and drawings (see for example the wonderful formalised battle of Crecy opposite p.300), and to specially commissioned paintings showing armorial flags or achievements of arms. One of the latter is a splendid example of the arms of Francis, Viscount Lovel, based on his Garter stall plate. There are also many black and white illustrations, showing heraldic monuments, manuscripts and so on.

Thus to sum up, this book is a very useful addition to a heraldic library. The addition of a brief bibliography to the main articles, and indeed an article actually entitled 'Bibliography' is a most helpful feature. The book itself is

disappointing in some ways, as indicated. It is not that replacement for Parker's *Glossary of Terms* or Elvin's *Dictionary* which we hope for, but it is well worth buying for the text and for the illustrations, particularly the colour plates.

PETER HAMMOND

RICHARD III AS DUKE OF GLOUCESTER: A STUDY IN CHARACTER. M. A. Hicks. 1986. University of York, Borthwick Papers No. 70. £1.80.

'If we accept that Richard was not aiming at the throne before 1483, then his career before 1483 should have a consistency and a purpose about it'.

Here is no Richard of Gloucester wading to the throne through rivers of blood, but once again he is credited with a purpose and an unnaturally *planned* life. Grave new faults are laid at his door: he now has 'an imperfect sense of dynasty' and he gives 'priority to his own good, his immediate political needs and the eventual salvation of his soul'. Moreover, this shows him to be 'quite untypical of his age and class'!

These and similar statements reflect the author's personal view of Richard III's early career, based mainly on folios 111-316b (not 315b) of British Library Manuscript Cotton Julius B xii, which contain a seemingly orderless collection of copies of grants, deeds, leases and indentures. These documents all concern Richard, Duke of Gloucester and his rights to various lands and offices, but the purpose of the collection as a whole is unknown. Dr. Hicks' attempt to explain its purpose has turned his work into a sombre study with psychological overtones — perhaps the reader should take warning from the depressing nineteenth-century view of Middleham Castle *en decadence* on the cover. For example, the fact that Gloucester, like so many of us, seems to have preserved documents of uncertain usefulness among his administrative papers, is taken to mean that he had 'a long memory' and that his intentions were none too good, and though the author admits there is very little to go on, Gloucester's acquisition of the Cumberland palatinate is supposed to have been 'a gamble' meant 'to balance his books' when he had, as Dr. Hicks concludes on the basis of much guesswork, been 'spending above his income'. Elsewhere Cumberland is described as the finishing touch to the 'creation of a . . . dynasty . . . more important than that of the Nevilles', a theory that seems to clash with the censure on the Duke's faulty 'sense of dynasty' noted above.

Dr. Hicks quite correctly says that a period should not be interpreted in the light of later events. Is it fair, then, to imply that our failure to understand 'even with hindsight' the events of May and June 1483 shows that Gloucester admirably masked his real intentions? Or to object to his seizure of the throne on the grounds that it 'ultimately led to the destruction of the royal house'?

In this study of Richard III's pre-regal career there are many references to the author's earlier work — though Ricardians would be glad to know *where* he discovered that Gloucester had 'legitimate sons, only one of whom survived at his accession'. There are many contradictory statements and many conclusions based on the author's preceding assumptions and one wonders therefore how

long the structure will withstand the touch of well-researched criticism. Theoretically it may be desirable and fruitful to study a man's previous career in order to interpret his later actions, but, even though there have been few clear breaks in the course of history, unexpectedly gaining the crown of England may well have meant a clear break in one man's life.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

A HISTORY OF ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS. Christopher de Hamel. 1987. Phaidon, Oxford. £25.

Christopher de Hamel's period begins with the first parchment codex and ends with the mass use of printing, that is from the first century A.D. to *circa* 1510. He classifies the thousands of surviving manuscript books, each different from the other, by the purpose for which they were made and these purposes effectively cover the period in a chronological order. He is fascinated by how and why books are made and by their travels and he communicates his enthusiasm in a lively, personal style. 'To every cow her offspring, and to every book its transcript', to quote a fifth century Irish king out of context; every transcript had its own unique character and its own adventures, and many of them are recorded in this book. For example, one short-sighted Swiss priest hollowed out the inside of his breviary to hold his spectacles, and the earliest surviving complete Latin Bible, made at Wearmouth or Jarrow for use in Rome at the order of Abbot Ceolfrith in the seventh century, was a copy of the one once owned by Cassiodorus himself which Benedict Biscop, Ceolfrith's predecessor, had brought from Rome to Wearmouth. The chapter on the books of Missionaries is one of the most fascinating — the books of the Irish, Anglo-Saxons and Northumbrians. The English monks made copies of religious texts to spread the Christian word over all Europe, but winter, we are told, might hold up production, freeze both fingers and ink and kill off the scribe.

Apart from these early examples there is little on the books produced in England, and nothing on the book trade of fifteenth century London, although there are tantalising illustrations of a psalter and Bible illuminated in London (plates 202 and 219) and a charming book of hours, 1½ by 2 inches, signed by the scribe Roger Pynchebek in 1474. We must wait for this trade to be further described for us by Paul Christianson and Kathleen Scott. There is, however, a most rewarding chapter on the Paris book trade in the twelfth to thirteenth century, a field which Dr. de Hamel has researched himself. It is arguably the best chapter in the book. In Paris the Latin Bible was 'redesigned and promoted' to become the product we know today. Its order was standardised, its chapters created (probably by Stephen Langton), thin vellum and small script in two columns forced what had been housed in twenty or so large volumes into one octavo manuscript. It was an immediate best-seller, so many being made that the following centuries hardly needed to manufacture any. The preaching friars took them all over Europe. Paris and its University also evolved the *pecia* system, a fast, ingenious reproduction method, controlled by the University, of loaning out exemplars for copying. In this setting the secular bookshop first took over from the monastery as the supplier of books.

'Books for Aristocrats' covers works of romance and chivalry, 'Books for Everyone' the other great medieval best-seller, the book of hours, and 'Books for Collectors' the work of the Italian Humanists in collecting the writings of the ancient world, designing a new script based on Carolingian minuscule (which they probably thought was Roman), and advising princes on how to build up their libraries. Vespasiano helped William Grey Bishop of Ely (1454-78) spend a lot of money on books in Italy. One of the scribes employed to copy books for Grey concluded a volume with, 'Lege feliciter, mi suavissime Ghuiglelme' translated by de Hamel as 'have a nice read, my dearest William'. Grey's, the Italian scribe's and de Hamel's own delight in books is very plain.

As will now be clear, this is a book full of anecdotes about books; almost every caption of the 250 excellent illustrations (eighty in colour) is an anecdote in itself. It is also a deft and entertaining introduction to the history of the manuscript book. There is a good bibliography with helpful comments.

ANNE F. SUTTON

SONGS OF DEATH: PERFORMANCE, INTERPRETATION AND THE TEXT OF 'RICHARD III'. R. Chris Hassel, Jnr. 1987. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London. £25.85.

This is an American book by an American author on aspects of Shakespeare's play *Richard III* — nowhere is the historical character mentioned. Having said that, the book is of interest to those interested in the history and details of the play, but it is episodic, and comprises, in effect, a series of essays on various aspects of the play loosely strung together within a framework of discussion of some interpretations of the play in performance. The result is that neither aspect is really given a satisfactorily full treatment.

Hassel begins with a brief examination of those performances which are on record and therefore generally available — that is Olivier's 1955 film, and the 1982 BBC Shakespeare *Richard III* with Ron Cook as Richard. Mention is made in passing of other performances which are very briefly summarised from reviews with much reference to Julie Hankey's fuller treatment of the play in performance (*Shakespeare: Richard III: plays in performance*, Junction Books 1981) and the RSC's Antony Sher/Bill Alexander production of 1984-85 is saved for the epilogue. Hassel is largely unimpressed by the BBC production, although conceding that it follows the text faithfully, and contains some effective scenes, notably the ghosts. By contrast, Olivier's film concentrates on Richard to and by the exclusion of all distracting elements. Anything that would lessen Richard's impact is cut — Margaret of Anjou, the wooing of Elizabeth Woodville and almost all of Richmond's part from Act V. The play shows us Richard losing control, being duped and falling apart, while Henry is 'building the Tudor dynasty', but Olivier prefers to take a view of the play that Hassel rather sweepingly equates with that of Cibber — only recently, he feels, have successful attempts been made to play the play as Shakespeare wrote it. (One feels that for Hassel, Olivier's Richard is to Shakespeare's Richard, as is that to the historical Richard!)

Hassel then studies three sections of the play in greater detail, firstly Act V: the battle scenes, the orations by Richard and Richmond — a study of comparative oratory — in the end Richmond's orations work, and Richard's do not. Chapter Three studies the wooing of Elizabeth Woodville, whom Hassel finds an interesting character, by no means 'shallow changing'. Richard sees her as a threat and Shakespeare builds up her character in contrast to his source in Hall, where having agreed to Elizabeth of York's marriage to Henry, she then submits to Richard's wishes. In Shakespeare it is the contrary: Richard does *not* win her, and she *then* agrees to the marriage of Elizabeth and Henry. In Chapter Four, Hassel discusses the 'rotten armour' scene, Richard's attempt to win over the citizens of London to his kingship. Hassel argues that the citizens are not really won over — the text, as witness the scrivener scene (often cut) makes this clear, as do the sources. Hassel makes the interesting point that Richard is already beginning to flag, his power to persuade the characters on the stage diminishing. At the beginning of the play, we the audience, are taken into Richard's confidence through his soliloquies: the distancing begins when Richard stops confiding in the audience, and his contemptuous disregard chills its earlier interest and allegiance. In his later soliloquies, the audience is eavesdropping, not sharing. From this point onwards Richard's image suffers from the attacks by the weeping queens, from Anne's reference to his 'timorous dreams', from his evident confusion with Catesby and Lovell, and his decline culminates in his defeats by Elizabeth Woodville and Henry. Hassel argues that Shakespeare has carefully orchestrated this decline; these 'songs of death', and the theatrical tradition which has preferred Richard to be 'himself again' has gone against the text.

Chapter Five studies the perceptions of providence in the play, of moral retribution — all damaged, Hassel argues, in Olivier's version, which cut out so much which pertains to them.

Chapter Six studies textual variants. There have of course been great alterations to the text as played, and there have also been considerable variations in the literary text. Hassel feels these should be studied in depth 'in an age that is finally performing Shakespeare's text with theatrical success'. He then studies textual variants relating particularly to the scenes and themes he has discussed earlier. 'Richard loves Richard, that is I am I' — or is it 'I and I'? Hassel finds both meaningful — but admits that this road can only be travelled in study, not in performance.

The epilogue studies the RSC Sher/Alexander 'Richard' which is (almost) Hassel's ideal performance (although he would still like the 'rotten armour' scenes to be more serious — is he a director *manqué*?). The play worked as a whole, the supporting cast were good, the set was effective: it was possible to make an exciting and valid performance without distorting Shakespeare's meaning.

The book as a whole, although offering interesting insights into the play in its central chapters, suffers, to my view, from trying to do too much; this is useful; the theatrical criticism is far less so, concentrating on too few performances to be sufficiently wide ranging or useful. Too much is made of the shortcomings of Olivier's film, which are surely by now well known — and it is

after all a *film* and not a theatre production. It is not an easy work to read, but for those interested in the text of *Richard III* it is worth persevering with.

ELIZABETH M. NOKES

THE CAMBRIDGE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES III, 1250-1520. Edited by R. Fossier, translated from the French by S. Hanbury Tenison, Cambridge University Press 1986. £25.

'Richard III had the 'babes in the Tower' killed and grabbed the crown'.

I fear it will be a long time before a general history like the one reviewed here will be able to afford a less extreme position on the subject, but — having now raised the hackles of most Ricardians — I hasten to say that this sentence is the book's major shortcoming. Its main attraction actually lies in its general statements, of which some necessarily display a lack of nuance, but most help to put local events and national trends in perspective. One sentence may sweep the reader from London to Aragon and back to the Rhône valley, drawing parallels and pointing out contrasts on the way, and though this tends to be confusing, one gets used to it and in time comes to enjoy it.

The volume's original title included: *Le Temps des Crises*, but for some reason this was left out in the English translation. Subtitles and chapter headings, however, leave no doubt that the authors regard the Later Middle Ages as a time of crises: class struggle all over Western Europe, the Black Death, the internal wars of rival factions, the confrontation between East and West, all justify their view. Western Europe is dealt with in two chapters, separated by one on the Turkish and Byzantine Empires and Africa. Unfamiliarity with the subject makes this part of the book more difficult to follow and one's interest tends to wane as, for instance, the African kingdoms are discussed and dynasty after dynasty and ruler after unknown ruler are dealt with. The reader will probably revive — as I did — as soon as the connection with the West is made and it is in fact the authors' purpose to discuss the history of various countries from the moment they come within reach of Western European influence.

In view of this unfamiliarity of many readers with some of the regions and peoples described, it is fortunate that numerous and adequate maps are provided. The illustrations are not impressive at first sight, but one will find that most are interesting, clear and relevant. Some of their captions, however, are rather odd: one would, I think, have some trouble finding a manuscript with the shelf-number 'C VII' in the British Library, or 'Ms. Book 764' in the Bodleian, and I am not prepared to believe that an Ottoman miniature is 'fifteenth century' when the Europeans depicted in it look as if they have just left the court of Charles II.

Some errors of detail in the text itself are perhaps unavoidable, but they make the reader suspicious of the parts he is not familiar with and on which he is forced to trust the authors (no footnotes are provided). Henry V died in August 1422 and not 'at the end of 1421'; much though the de la Poles would have liked it, they did not 'end up as Dukes of Lancaster'; Charles the Bold and his court would have strenuously denied that 'Louis XI *defeated* the princes' at

Monthléry (1465); there never was an 'Order of the Pheasant', as far as I know, in Burgundy or elsewhere; etc.

The translation generally does not interfere with one's reading, though too many words have been left in their original language and the glossary does not always help. There is a suggestion of tiredness towards the end of the book as the English grows less fluent and the number of errors increases. (*Armes blanches* are not 'white weapons' but bladed weapons, the alum in the mines at Tolfa was not 'invented' by Cosimo di Medici and London Bridge was not 'entirely covered' with houses.)

These are, however, minor drawbacks. The book offers a vast panorama and much well-written information. It steers clear of the journalese rhetoric of some books on the Middle Ages written for a more general public, and yet manages to tell, for example, the story of the fall of Constantinople briefly and movingly: the steady dismemberment of the Eastern Empire and the selfishness and inadequacy of the West are described in such a way that the unavoidable end of the great city hits the reader like the climax of a tragedy — as it deserves to do.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

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

Art Cosgrove (editor), *A New History of Ireland: Volume Two. Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534*. 982 pages. 1987. Oxford Clarendon Press. £75.

A large array of authors cover all aspects of literature, architecture, economy, society and Anglo-Irish relations. D. B. Quinn is the author of the 1460-1534 chapters on the political scene.

Mary Dove, *The Perfect Age of Man's Life*. 175 pages. 1986. Cambridge University Press. £25.

Investigation of the Ages of Man. The Middle Age was the Perfect Age, reigning as a king at the top of the wheels of Fortune and Life. Uses both pictorial and poetic English sources.

Avril Henry (editor), *The Mirour of Mans Saluacioun*. 347 pages. 1987. Scolar Press. £35.

The first publication of a Middle English translation made in the early fifteenth century of this compendium of biblical and legendary stories. Illustrated with the woodcuts of the German edition of c.1475.

Sandra L. Hindman, *Christine de Pizan's 'Epistre d'Othéa'. Painting and Politics at the court of Charles VI*. Studies and Texts 77. Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, Canada. 1986.

An attractive and informative description of Christine de Pizan's involvement in the illustration of her own work, and an at times daring interpretation of the way she tried to convey her political advice to her readers through the miniatures of the *Epistre d'Othéa*, her literary 'mirror of princes' (c.1400).

Martha C. Howell, *Women, Production and Patriarchy in late Medieval Cities*. 285 pages. 1986. Chicago University Press.

A study of those industries which had a predominantly female workforce, such as textiles, in the very different and well documented conditions of Leiden and Cologne, and how and why women were virtually excluded from these activities by circa 1550.

Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Autonomy and Community: the Royal Manor of Havering, 1200-1500*. 319 pages. 1986. Cambridge University Press. £30.

A definitive and absorbing study of a remarkably well documented area including the modern Romford and Hornchurch. The manor enjoyed the privileges and advantages of ancient demesne, proximity to London and weak lordship. Its tenants were prosperous, independent and tenacious of their rights.

John Twigg, *A History of Queen's College Cambridge, 1448-1986*. 533 pages. Illustrated. 1987. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge. £19.50.

Only a short chapter on the pre-1485 founders and foundresses; succinct and judicious paragraphs on Richard III. Andrew Doket receives attention as an influential president (died 1484).

ARTICLES

Clive Burgess, 'By Quick and by Dead': wills and pious provision in late medieval Bristol, *English Historical Review*, volume 102, number 405, October 1987, pages 837-858.

Sees the disappearance of Purgatory from their faith as an important cause of the laity's antipathy towards the religious establishment in the late sixteenth century. Examines the influence of the doctrine of Purgatory before the Reformation and how it showed itself in people's wills.

Conal Condren, Cornwallis' Paradoxical Defence of Richard III: A Machiavellian Discourse on Morean Mythology? *Moreana*, volume 24, number 94, June 1987, pages 5-24.

A discussion of Cornwallis' intentions in *The Encomium or Praise* of Richard III. Was he defending Richard as an example of the Machiavellian type of prince? Did he protect himself from the implications of such a defence of Machiavellianism by calling his work a 'paradox', an accepted literary genre of the time? Was it significant that *The Encomium* was printed by its author with other paradoxes including *The Fox*, a praise of syphilis? The author reaches no conclusions.*

C. S. L. Davies, Bishop John Morton, the Holy See and the Accession of Henry VII, *English Historical Review*, volume 112, number 403, January 1987, pages 2-30.

The part played by John Morton 1483-5 in the plots to put Henry Tudor on the throne at first from the Netherlands (probably) and then from Rome. A detailed analysis not only of his activities and affiliations against the background of continental politics, but also of papal attitudes to England 1483-5 and the special relationship between England and Rome 1485-9.*

Trevor Foulds, Medieval Cartularies, *Archives*, volume 18, number 77, April 1987, pages 3-35.

An extensive and useful appraisal of both ecclesiastical and secular cartularies (*i.e.* transcriptions of documents into one volume or roll), 1200-1600. Why and how they were compiled using the evidence of their prefaces and other sources. The author hopes to correct misconceptions about these compilations held by historians and others.

Robert C. Hairsine, 'A bowke consernynge Canfforde', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, volume 108, 1986, pages 47-52.

A reconstruction of the medieval buildings of Canford held in the later fifteenth century by George Duke of Clarence, the Crown and Margaret Beaufort.*

M. A. Hicks, The Piety of Margaret, Lady Hungerford (d. 1478), *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, volume 38, number 1, January 1987, pages 19-38.

Her wills and religious foundations provide considerable information about her religious knowledge, her piety and its preoccupations. Much influenced by the use of Syon. Detailed description of her mortuary chapel and chantry in Salisbury Cathedral, its plan, decoration and the services of its chaplains. The reasons behind her choices.*

T. H. Lloyd, A Reconsideration of two Anglo-Hanseatic Treaties of the Fifteenth Century, *English Historical Review*, volume 102, number 405, October 1987, pages 916-933.

An analysis of the treaties of Vorrath 1437 and Utrecht 1474 with a rejection of past assumptions that the former was in any way a diplomatic victory for the English and the later was an English diplomatic debacle.*

Joel T. Rosenthal, Other Victims: Peeresses as War Widows, 1450-1500, *History*, volume 72, number 235, June 1987, pages 213-230.

The widows of peers who died 1450-1500 in battles, were executed afterwards or were politically executed or killed by mob violence. Statistics of age, remarriage, length of marriage and widowhood. Details of the difficulties experienced by widows in getting their financial rights and of their wills. Some speculation on their attitude to war.

Margaret Scott, A Burgundian Visit to Scotland in 1449, *Costume*, number 21, 1987, pages 16-25.

The 1449 marriage of Mary of Guelders to James II of Scotland and subsequent coronation at Edinburgh. The astonishment of the Burgundian visitors at the uncouthness of the Scots and their dress is the starting point for an examination of female dress in Scotland at this date.

Malcolm G. Underwood, Politics and Piety in the Household of Lady Margaret Beaufort, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, volume 38, number 1, January 1987, pages 39-52.

Despite her piety recorded by John Fisher, Margaret never removed from the world but played an active and supporting role to her son. She made adroit use of her wide connections, both personal and territorial, to make and secure her religious foundations and her dynasty.*

Roger Virgoe, An Election Dispute of 1483, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, volume 60, number 141, February 1987, pages 24-44.

Study of a disputed election in Norfolk for the Parliament of January 1483, the details being preserved in a subsequent case brought against the presiding sheriff in Common Pleas. Sir Thomas Howard and Sir William Knyvett elected and John and Robert Radcliffe defeated. Affiliations and possible rivalries are analysed and the local political situation described — a list of 273 attestors to the election survives. Transcript of records.*

Notes on Contributors

David Baldwin. A Member since 1978. Contributed a paper on the Battle of Stoke to the 1987 Oxford symposium. Currently researching the Hastings family's role in the political management of the Midland counties for a Ph.D.

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

Peter Hammond joined the Society in 1963. Elected to the Committee 1970 and became Research Officer. Co-editor of Harleian Ms. 433, *Coronation of Richard III, Road to Bosworth Field*. Editor of *Wolpole, Historic Doubts*.

Kenneth Hillier. Member since 1973. B.A. History, University College, London. Senior Teacher, Ashby Grammar School. Author of *'The Book of Ashby-de-la-Zouch'* (1984). Chairman of Ashby Museum. President of Ashby Local History Society.

Elizabeth M. Nokes. A Member since 1966. Correspondence Secretary of the Society.

Jeremy Potter has been Chairman of the Richard III Society since 1971. He is the author of *Good King Richard?, Pretenders* and the Ricardian novel *A Trail of Blood*.

Anne F. Sutton. A Member since 1967. Co-author of *The Coronation of Richard III*. An archivist by profession.

Livia Visser-Fuchs has been a Member since 1977. She is working on the literary background and propaganda of Anglo-Burgundian relations of the Yorkist period.

Barrie Williams. A Member since 1981. Head of History and Assistant Chaplain at St. Hilda's Priory and School, Whitby; author of *The Bishop's Subscription Book, The Franciscan Revival* and *Archbishop John Williams*.

Contributions to the Ricardian

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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).

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