

Book Reviews

STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY PRESENTED TO R. ALLEN BROWN. Edited Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher J. Holdsworth and Janet L. Nelson. 1989. Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, £39.50.

This is a fitting tribute to the late Professor R. Allen Brown, the wide range of subjects and the across-the-centuries, across-the-disciplines approach bearing witness to his own many-faceted interests and his commitment to the study of medieval and especially Norman history in its widest application. The papers are well-balanced in length and weight, and the standard of the research is uniformly high, with the scholarly argument always solidly anchored in contemporary evidence.

As is to be expected in a volume for Allen Brown, there is much about Normans and about castles. Jonathan Coad charts the changing fortunes of Dover Castle from the late nineteenth century, while P. E. Curnow gives a workmanlike and informative description and structural analysis of the tower house at Hopton Castle, comparing it with others in the region and providing illuminating and helpful illustrations. M. W. Thompson extracts interesting details about the architecture of a medieval castle from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and Ifor Rowlands discusses the complicated question of the custody of Rochester Castle in 1213-15, when it was held from the king in an uneasy partnership by archbishop Stephen Langton and constable Reginald de Cornhill. Outstanding is Marjorie Chibnall's 'Orderic Vitalis on Castles', which shows how rich a source this chronicler is for information on all aspects of castles; together, Chibnall and Orderic really bring the subject to life.

The history of William I's sobriquets of Conqueror and Bastard is traced by Michel du Bouard, and John Gillingham discusses William's qualities as a military leader in a paper so packed with information (including voluminous footnotes) that one feels the material has been condensed into a scope inadequate for it. Raymonde Foreville studies the relationship of St. Thomas Becket with Capetian France, the country of his exile. In an interesting, original essay Eleanor Searle argues for Queen Emma as an early female conqueror, of active importance and influence in the fortunes of herself and her kin.

Warfare is there, too. Matthew Bennett surveys the Old French Rule of the Knights Templar as a military manual, and makes the subject live for his readers. Rosalind Hill gives a literally down-to-earth account of the battle of Stockbridge in 1141, showing how the physical properties of the terrain

influenced the outcome; one regrets the absence of a sketch map. Nicholas Hooper looks at the ways in which royal fleets were raised, manned and paid for in late Anglo-Saxon times, and Janet Nelson explores, in a clear, well-constructed argument, the origins of knighthood as evidenced in the *Histories* of Nithard, a grandson of Charlemagne.

Enthralling are the two papers on Romanesque church architecture. George Zarnecki shows the influence of the Ely doorways on rural churches in the region and provides evidence of work in Worcestershire and Suffolk by itinerant Italian masons; there are 26 beautiful plates. Richard Gem looks at the beginnings of Romanesque architecture in England, and at the reasons for its development, in a paper which whets one's appetite for more.

Other highlights are Christopher Holdsworth's well-structured and illuminating contribution on the establishment and history of the five Cistercian abbeys in the Exeter diocese, and R. H. C. Davis's analytical study of the revival of Northumbrian monasticism after the Conquest. Interesting is C. Warren Hollister's method of tracing the itinerary of Henry I's campaign against the villainous Robert of Bellême by pinpointing the locations of the writs he issued on the way. Henry Loyn and Richard Mortimer contribute useful papers on the Norman settlement in Essex and on the Baynard family in East Anglia respectively, and Jim Bradbury, in a sympathetic study, rehabilitates Fulk le Réchin of Anjou, victim of a consistent and (says Bradbury) undeserved bad press from his own day to ours.

Some papers are so densely packed with facts and supply so much information and reference material in voluminous footnotes and appendices that, though solid pieces of research, they are not easily accessible to the reader who might have been helped with more clearly stated analyses and conclusions. Perhaps there was a case here for additional editorial guidance.

The execution of the book is adequate, though this reviewer found the unequal intensity of the print on different pages, and even on the same page, hard on the eyes. The quality of the abundant illustrations is good on the whole; why some are on separate glossy pages while others are simply printed in with the text is a mystery. Printing errors are few, though the misspelling of Professor Zarnecki's name in the list of subscribers is to be regretted.

Taking it all together, this is a successful *Festschrift* and a useful research tool for anyone interested in medieval history in general and Norman history in particular.

DIANA B. TYSON

FRANCIS WORMALD, COLLECTED WRITINGS. II: STUDIES IN ENGLISH AND CONTINENTAL ART OF THE LATER MIDDLE AGES. Edited by J. J. G. Alexander, T. J. Brown and Joan Gibbs. 1988. Harvey Miller Publishers, London, £38.

In 1979, Harvey Miller published papers by Francis Wormald devoted to subjects from the sixth to the twelfth centuries. The second volume in the series

brings the chronological coverage up to the fifteenth century with thirteen papers originally published between 1937 and 1972. Surveys of medieval art are not as numerous as those for the art of the post-medieval period. Taken together, the papers of Francis Wormald provide the best kind of survey in that they broach a coherent series of themes and problems covering medieval illumination and painting in England and elsewhere, defining major lines of development and fields of study, and showing at the same time the soundest way of arriving at firm conclusions. There is brief reference after each paper to later studies by others on the subject in question: One can only concur with the editors of the first volume: on a wide range of subjects, '[Wormald's] work forms the basis of subsequent study which has taken place due to it'.

Taken singly, each paper appears to set out to solve a very modest problem, whether this is to describe and account for the change from the fluttering, mannerist line of Anglo-Saxon drawing style to the more solid, hieratic style signified by the Albani Psalter in the second quarter of the twelfth century, or the English origins of the main miniaturist of the Fitzwarin Psalter in the second half of the fourteenth century. The method of exposition is marked by the utmost clarity as the reader is taken securely step by step from one piece of evidence to another; when there is detail, the general historical point towards which the argument tends is never lost sight of. Wormald's conclusions certainly command attention today. In his discussion of the paintings in Westminster Abbey, he might suggest that the origins of the East Anglian school be sought in the Court School of Henry III and Edward I, whereas today we are more used to seeing the former as a group of related styles each with its particular affiliation, but the identification of that court style seems quite secure. On the Wilton Diptych, his view that it was painted *after* Richard II's death, possibly as late as 1413, has been challenged, but by no means conclusively. The basis of Wormald's argument is stylistic comparison of the diptych with work found in manuscripts datable to after 1400, that is to say a Book of Hours probably made for John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, between 1401 and 1410, and a Psalter and Hours made for John, Duke of Bedford, after 1414; to this he adds evidence of the cult of Richard II after 1399 and of rumours propagated by the Countess of Oxford and others that Henry's IV's predecessor was still alive. John Harvey's re-examination of the diptych in 1961 dated it to c.1395 when Richard II was promoting the theory of divine kingship and the supremacy of royal power over constitutional restraints; details of costume, he argued, would place the painting before 1400, though the notion that Richard II's heraldic arms could only have been made for the king himself does not entirely carry the day. In this case, Wormald perhaps gave the greatest weight to stylistic evidence, while Harvey preferred circumstantial arguments, but the question remains by and large an open one. The paper on the relic of the true cross at Bromholm, in which archival and literary sources are used with great effect, reconstitutes an object that was last heard of in the hands of Thomas Cromwell's servant Richard Southwell in 1537 — Henry VIII's minister was no doubt intrigued by the relic which Coggeshall had earlier described as being rescued from Byzantium after the sack of the city in 1204. Wormald's discussion presents the relic as a reflection of popular piety, a subject he follows in his paper on an illustrated compilation of devotional texts made in a Carthusian house in the north of

England in the fifteenth century (BL, Add.MS.37049). The pictures of tombs here, with finely dressed figures lying above skeletons devoured by worms, reflect a popular representation of a kind of funerary monument appearing in France and England in the first half of the fifteenth century. Again, an artefact is brought into prominence as evidence for the study of the beliefs and attitudes of contemporaries.

Do current ways of looking at the middle ages differ in any respects from those of Francis Wormald? There is perhaps less readiness today to take style alone in miniature painting as the basis for identifying any artistic personality, and an appeal to twelfth century humanism and the greater interest in 'Man' (p.27) to explain a stylistic change may make today's reader hesitate for a second. The secondary decoration of any manuscript is likely today to be given as much attention as the painting style of a miniaturist when it comes to relating one work to another. The papers republished here show very much how Francis Wormald identified the most fruitful avenues for the investigation of medieval art in England, and we are once again indebted to Mrs. Elly Miller for another publishing venture that makes readily available important texts and sources for medieval studies.

ROWAN WATSON

THE NEW MONARCHY: ENGLAND 1471-1534. Anthony Goodman. 1988. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, £3.50.

The historiography of medieval and early modern England is littered with myths. Three immediately spring to mind: the myth of the Norman Conquest as the end of Anglo-Saxon liberty and the beginning of foreign tyranny; the myth of 'good' King Richard the Lionheart and 'bad' King John; and the Whig myth of the English Revolution of the mid-seventeenth century as the inevitable result of the rise of Parliament (not to mention the Marxist myth of the same phenomenon as the historically necessary confrontation between a near-moribund feudalism and a newly-emerged capitalism!). Clearly, many recent historians have been only too ready to relegate the so-called 'New Monarchy' of Yorkist and early Tudor times to the realm of mythology as well. Whether they are justified in doing so is the central concern of Anthony Goodman in this interesting contribution to a Historical Association series of 'incisive essays' critically summarising research on 'central themes and key episodes of history' for sixth-formers and undergraduates.

Since J. R. Green first coined the term 'New Monarchy' in his *Short History of the English People* (1874), it has had both firm supporters and harsh critics. Following his restoration to the throne in 1471, Green believed, Edward IV 'laid the foundations of an absolute rule which Henry VII did little more than develop and consolidate.' A. F. Pollard latched on to the label in his *Factors in Modern History* (1907) but substituted Henry VII for Edward IV as founder and argued that, by harnessing the support of the rising 'middle class',

the Tudors created in England an embryonic modern state. For the next half century the 'New Monarchy' concept thrived in analyses of early Tudor government and was still going strong, in a modified form, in J. D. Mackie's *The Earlier Tudors* (published in 1952). In 1953, however, G. R. Elton launched a frontal assault on it, declaring that 'Yorkist or Tudor monarchy was nothing fresh either in aims or methods or doctrine': the term 'New Monarchy', he concluded, 'only confuses and ought to be abolished.' Yet Elton himself, it might be argued, merely moved the starting point to the 1530s in his own *Tudor Revolution in Government*, casting Thomas Cromwell (rather than Edward IV or Henry VII) in the role of founder (not, indeed, of royal despotism but of modern constitutional monarchy and the sovereign national state in England). Since the 1950s the 'New Monarchy' has been criticised from all sides: medievalists have shown a distinct tendency to stress the evidence of continuity in later medieval and early Tudor government; later Tudor and early Stuart historians have been at pains to emphasise the notable limitations on government authority even after the 1530s; and much recent work on the Yorkist and early Tudor monarchy has highlighted renovation rather than novelty.

All this is examined and commented upon by Anthony Goodman, but there is much more to this study than that: indeed, Goodman's own contribution to the on-going debate is impressive. While emphasising that Yorkist and early Tudor kings (and their councillors) were not 'striving to burst the monarchy out of a constitutional straitjacket' and suggesting that what institutional change there was 'often reinvigorated traditional offices and functions', he nevertheless concludes that the 'fifty years or so between Edward IV's recovery of the realm in 1471 and Henry VIII's declaration of Royal Supremacy in 1534 were ones in which the frequency and vigour of institutional experiment in central government are hard to parallel in any previous fifty-year period.' He points to the 'outstandingly successful' achievement of the Yorkists and early Tudors in 'running a prestigious household' and 'providing for its costs without alarming and outraging their subjects'; the expansion of royal justice; the emergence of a new balance of power between the Crown and its greatest subjects clearly beneficial to the former; and the strengthening and widening of royal patronage as a further means of expanding monarchical authority. He has much of value, too, on the growth of royal propaganda and its significance, as well as on what contemporary commentators — such as John Fortescue, Polydore Vergil, Thomas More and Thomas Starkey — have to offer regarding the benefits and dangers of burgeoning royal power. Of particular interest to Ricardians, perhaps, is his discussion of the *History of Richard III* (pp.70-72), where he emphasises the importance of More's critical treatment of the nobility in 1483 no less than his malignant portrayal of the king himself.

Certainly, Anthony Goodman achieves his objectives here: he does indeed, as the publisher's blurb claims, describe succinctly 'changes in the theory and mechanisms of government' c.1471-c.1534, places them firmly 'in the context of social attitudes and problems', and reassesses effectively 'the role of government in terms of long-standing historical controversies as to whether the Crown renovated the medieval monarchy or laid the foundations of the modern state.'

Throughout, the study is perceptive, well-informed and vigorously written; the summaries of recent work on the period are helpful (although marred by occasional errors such as J. S. Rokwell instead of J. S. Roskell on page 46 and A. J. Pollard in mistake for A. F. Pollard on page 76); and the author's conclusions are notably sensible and well-balanced. Nevertheless, so different is Goodman's conception of the 'New Monarchy' from those of J. R. Green, A. F. Pollard or, for that matter, G. R. Elton, that it would surely be best finally to abandon a label which has always proved more a handicap than an asset to historians.

KEITH DOCKRAY

AN ORDINANCE OF POTTAGE. An Edition of the Fifteenth Century Culinary Recipes in Yale University's Ms. Beinecke 163. Constance B. Hieatt (editor). 1988. Prospect Books, London, £13.95.

By combining a scholarly transcript of a fifteenth century manuscript with an adaptation of the recipes for the modern kitchen Constance B. Hieatt has produced a book that will appeal both to medieval social historians and to the more adventurous cook. Professor Hieatt of the Department of English, University of Western Ontario, who has edited other medieval cookery manuscripts including the fourteenth century 'Forme of Cury' for the Early English Text Society, 1985, uses her unrivalled knowledge of medieval culinary texts to make a detailed comparison between the Ms. Beinecke 163 in Yale University Library with similar material contained in the British Library (Sloane Mss. 7 and 442) and the Bodleian Library (Rawlinson Ms. D 1222). This enables her to arrive at more accurate and comprehensible recipes and to resolve satisfactorily a number of difficulties caused by scribal errors.

The collection of recipes is important to the social historian of the fifteenth century for the light it sheds on diet and the quality of life enjoyed by the most privileged members of society. These were dishes only eaten in 'a household of uncommon pretensions' and tell us nothing about the daily consumption of the average man in the street. The commonplace is not included here but we have recipes for the most elaborate banquets such as the Coronation feast of Richard III when a rational serving order was observed, starting with 'frumente', a potage of boiled wheat and a great variety of meat dishes — boiled meat, boar's head, spiced brawn, lombard stew, 'saracen bruet' (venison stew) and roast meat of all kinds, pig, kid, rabbit, chicken, partridge, quail, pheasant, crane, swan and peacock (not recommended to the modern cook.) These are followed by delicacies such as 'crystal jelly', 'samacays' or fritters and 'sotyltys' or subtleties, that is dishes purporting to be something which they are not, such as meatballs coated in goldleaf to look like golden apples!

With the current interest in cookery of the past such as that demonstrated by Sara Paston-Williams to Sir Roy Strong in the recent Channel Four Television series on culinary history this book will tempt many a reader to try

out some of the more appealing recipes. Who could resist 'Floreye' (chicken pâté with roses), 'Blaunke desyre' or Syrian eggs, 'Tayle' (a pudding of mixed dried fruits), 'Hages of Almayne' (stuffed omelettes) or 'Premeroll' (primrose potage made at Easter)? Some of the general cookery points that emerge from the recipes are intriguing: sweet and savoury ingredients are commonly mixed together in the same dish. On first reading it would appear that many of the dishes were highly spiced but the editor argues against excessive use of spices and provides helpful guidance on quantities for the modern cook, variable to suit individual taste. Strong colourings in food also seems to have been attractive to the medieval eye with frequent use of natural plant dyes to achieve red, green and yellow, saffron being especially popular and fresh green herbs to produce 'Sauce verd' to accompany fish dishes. As much attention is given to presentation as to the actual cooking processes: boiled shrimps are to be 'leyd all aboute the sydez of the disches, and ley the backesye outward, and every course till ye come to the mydward of the disches within.' A vital ingredient for many of the recipes is egg but fortunately for the modern cook the more usual instruction is 'have yolks of eyron sodyn hard'!

The book is delightfully illustrated with drawings from medieval sources by Eulalia Pensado and is provided with a useful glossary and index to both the medieval recipe titles and the modernised equivalents. This makes the book of real practical use and it should find a place on the kitchen book shelf as well as in the library of the fifteenth century historian.

DIANA DUNN

THE CREATION OF BRITTANY: A LATE MEDIEVAL STATE. Michael Jones. 1988. Hambledon Press, London, £32. Members can obtain this book at a 30% discount direct from the publishers, Hambledon Press, 102 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 8HX.

Later medieval Brittany is a subject Dr. Jones has made very much his own. Since the publication of his important survey *Ducal Brittany 1364-1399* (Oxford 1970) he has brought out no less than thirty-five articles, in both French and English! The present volume represents a sample of his work, sixteen pieces (five in French) covering a wide variety of subjects ranging from political and administrative matters to a study of the remarkable late fifteenth-century collection of manuscripts owned by Anne of Brittany. The essays combine broader interpretation, on the themes of crown and nobility and the Breton sense of identity and culture, and detailed and original research. In the latter category two articles stand out. The first, a quite outstanding discussion of Brittany's medieval fortifications, harnesses document and archaeological evidence to investigate the reasons for the duchy's dramatic collapse in the face of invading French troops at the end of the fifteenth century. Had Henry VII been as well informed he might have moderated his foreign policy accordingly! The second, a discussion of the ransom of Jean de Bretagne, count of Penthievre, illuminates the underlying tensions of Richard II's court, which

impinged on these financial negotiations. All the pieces have small additional paragraphs, up-dating points of detail where necessary. They provide a stimulating survey of Breton affairs.

MICHAEL K. JONES

SIR THOMAS MALORY. Felicity Riddy. 1987. E. J. Brill, Leiden, c.£19.50.

Ricardians may find this study of Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* the more attractive now they know that Richard III himself was interested in the stories of Arthur and owned a manuscript of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. Malory may have been unique as a writer and re-interpreter of the material, he was also a mere 'man of his time' — as much as Richard — with the same or similar concerns and interests. The composition of the present book and the way in which various aspects of *Le Morte Darthur* are discussed relates strikingly to the known contents of the King's library. The titles of four of its six chapters could also serve to classify Richard's spheres of interest: 'the British Past', 'Good Manners', 'Right Conduct' and 'the Next World'.

The first introductory chapter, 'The World of the Book', is a *résumé* of the facts now known about the life of Malory, but it also describes fifteenth-century literary taste and confirms the impression given, for instance, by the collection owned by Richard as Duke of Gloucester (Longleat Ms.257), of a preference for romances with moral overtones, for books combining courtly and pious material and for entertainment that is also didactic. The author suggests this is evidence of an inner tension between the active and the contemplative life that many fifteenth-century readers may have felt.

Malory's handling of the British past reflects the general popularity of Arthur and the willingness to believe in him and his conquests for chauvinist and political reasons — compare Richard III's *Tristan*, *Historia Troiae*, Geoffrey of Monmouth and his Anonymous Chronicle. Malory's style is thought comparable to the 'factual' style of contemporary chroniclers, which leaves things open for our interpretation, relating events to each other by implication rather than explanation.

The contemporary concern with social status — a concern I am tempted to assume in every inhabitant of the British Isles since the Trojan Brutus took over from the giants — is considered, partly by discussing Malory's meaning of the words 'noble' and 'nobility' and their opposites — perhaps Richard's *Ipomedon*, *Grisild* and even his *De Regimine Principum* may be mentioned here. The story of Sir Gareth and his career from kitchen boy to Knight of the Round Table is illustrated by the examples of the Pastons and the Woodvilles, families of Malory's time whose social climbing engendered feelings of hostility similar to those that Gareth encountered. Other sources used to explain Malory's views on social distinctions are Tiptoft's *Declamacion of Noblesse* and Worcester's *Boke of Noblesse*.

The long section of 'Sir Tristram de Lyones' in *Le Morte Darthur*, derived from the French prose *Tristan* of which Richard of Gloucester owned a text, is said to give a poignant picture of the contemporary social world, a divided and disordered society split by factional hatred and xenophobia that *needed* the many works of spiritual guidance written at the time and the continuous preaching of meekness, charity and love, to maintain its stability.

Fifteenth-century piety and preoccupation with the next world was represented in Richard's library by his *Boke of Special Grace* by Mechtild of Hackeborn and his book of hours. Here they are dealt with in the discussion of the Grail story. Lancelot's relationship to Galahad, his son, for instance, is suggested to be a possible metaphor for the anteriority of the active life to the contemplative. In Malory's version the quest for the Grail can also be seen as a search that was inward and individual (in contrast to the former unity of the Round Table), just as in the late Middle Ages a more private communication with God was sought than in the previous centuries. The Grail as container of Christ's blood and Galahad's receiving of 'oure Lordes Body betwixte hys hondys' would greatly appeal to fifteenth-century Christians with their intense devotion to the Eucharist.

Such a division of Malory's work and world, and relating it to Richard III's books, is artificial and perhaps far-fetched, but it may help to create a clearer view of the concerns of Malory and his contemporaries. Some details of interpretation and the division of *Le Morte Darthur* into the sections chosen by the author will lead to further discussion, but about the general interest and stimulating qualities of this book for Ricardian readers there need be little doubt — only its price is unattractive.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

Notes on Contributors

Keith Dockray. Senior Lecturer in History, Huddersfield Polytechnic. Author of *Richard III: A Reader in History* (1988) and recent articles on fifteenth-century England. Currently researching a book on *Yorkshire and the Civil War*.

Diana Dunn. Lecturer in History at Chester College of Higher Education.

Arnold J. James, OBE, now retired, was Principal of the Barry College from 1959 to 1985. Co-author of *Union to Reform, Wales at Westminster* and *A Geography of Wales*.

Michael K. Jones is a Lecturer in the Department of Medieval History, University of Glasgow. He finished his Ph.D. in 1982 and is at present co-writing a biography of Lady Margaret Beaufort.

Joyce M. Melhuish. Member of Committee. Joined the Society in mid-1950s. Civil servant, Department of the Environment; (retired) formerly concerned with administration of royal palaces, and subsequently, of ancient monuments in southern England.

Diana Tyson. Mainly interested in Old French historiography. Author of *La Vie du Prince Noir*, by *Chandos Herald* and of the forthcoming new edition of the *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*.

Livia Visser-Fuchs is working on the literary background and propaganda of Anglo-Burgundian relations of the Yorkist period.

Rowan Watson. Assistant Keeper (Special Collections) in the library at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

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.

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