

Book Reviews

ENGLISH AND INTERNATIONAL: STUDIES IN THE LITERATURE, ART AND PATRONAGE OF MEDIEVAL ENGLAND. Elizabeth Salter. Edited by Derek Pearsall and Nicolette Zeeman. 1988. Cambridge University Press, £40.

This book brings together a selection of the late Elizabeth Salter's most significant publications on Chaucer, alliterative poetry, and the relationship between literature and the visual arts, and sets them between two substantial pieces of hitherto unpublished work: the opening chapters of a planned book on the cultural contexts of early Middle English literature, and an extended investigation of 'the Annunciation to the Shepherds in later medieval art and drama', which began life as a series of lectures. The apparently miscellaneous nature of the collection and the unfinished state of some of its constituent parts might sound unpromising, but in fact the dedication with which the material has been revised and presented by its editors, Derek Pearsall and Nicolette Zeeman, has produced a most impressive vindication of their desire to bring it into print. The sequence and grouping of the essays has allowed both for a coherence of literary-historical chronology, as we are led forward from the twelfth century to the fifteenth, and for a subtle demonstration of the span of the author's scholarly and intellectual concerns, from the contexts which informed the writing of 'great works' traditionally part of the canon of Middle English literature to the methodological problems inherent in the cultivation of socio-economic or aesthetic principles of literary analysis.

The previously published material is in general still valuable and fresh. The section on '*Piers Plowman* and alliterative poetry' includes Salter's introduction to an edition of selections from the C-text (the product of collaboration with Derek Pearsall), which remains one of the most illuminating discussions of the workings of allegory, in both general and specific terms. Ground-breaking work on 'The Alliterative Revival', published in 1966, is set together with further thoughts published over a decade later. Articles on *The Simonie*, *Wynnere and Wastoure*, and *A Complaint against Blacksmiths* synthesize the fruits of historical research and textual analysis and reveal 'some of the problems often set for us by medieval vernacular texts, in which an impression of strong but unlocalised life urges us to work towards reducing some of the uncertainties of authorship, intention and status'. The 'Chaucer' section, with its acute and sensitive

appraisals of *Troilus and Criseyde* and a slighter piece on 'Chaucer and Internationalism', leads neatly into a series of essays on 'Literature and the visual arts', beginning with a fine theoretical discussion from 1969, and continuing with a comparatively little-known investigation of '*Piers Plowman* and the Visual Arts' and the discussion of the *Troilus* frontispiece written to accompany the facsimile of MS Corpus 61. The preferred focuses of Salter's research — Langland, Chaucer, the handling of images in literary or visual form — are clearly evident in these pieces, and the churlish might signal some degree of overlap in the repetition of certain phrases or illustrative points. But the intellectual responses are in no way static, and the selection of articles clearly accommodates changes of perspective brought about by some new evidence or insight; it is heartening to see the author returning to refine or modify her view of matters like the narrator's role in the ending of *Troilus*, or the circumstances which encouraged the alliterative revival.

The sections of new material in the book in fact brilliantly confirm the range of its author's interests, addressing themselves to material which features rarely in the other essays and which has indeed in some cases been generally overlooked by scholarship. The first part, 'An obsession with the continent', explores English literary culture from about 1150 to 1350, stressing that 'There are structures of life, art, and thought which support the most seemingly fragile, even insignificant medieval text, and give it that substance which purely evaluative criticism must deny', and rebuilding some of these structures with painstaking but always lively accumulation of inter-disciplinary detail. The international complexity of Anglo-Norman culture, illustrated with reference to royal courts and aristocratic and episcopal households, is seen to preclude a purely 'English' tradition of writing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the intermeshing of French and Latin with vernacular traditions, along with the concerns of particular patrons, are made to underpin fine analyses of *The Owl and the Nightingale* and Layamon's *Brut*. The increasingly complex political situation of the early fourteenth century is linked to changes in cultural concern as demonstrated in a study of the patronage of Henry III (highlighting the career of Henry of Avranches), which was designed to lead into a sadly absent discussion of MS Harley 2253. The mapping of patterns and trends in these chapters is challenging and flexible, prepared to accommodate complexity, and subtly yet lucidly expressed. Immense amounts of information are conveyed, and (partly through the energies of the editors) the annotation is full and generous.

Similar virtues inform the final essay, whose matter and approach are however of a different order. Here, English and French plays and manuscript illustrations provoke the question of the extent to which devotional forms were secularized in the late Middle Ages, and are used as the basis for a theoretical argument about the adequacy of our means for detecting such transformations. An instinct that the symbolic potential of shepherd-figures recedes as they increasingly become vehicles for comedy, complaint, and social comment is tested against evidence whose capacity to mislead is always kept in view; patterns of social pressure (such as the forms of artistic patronage, or the conditions of dramatic performance) are seen to demand as much consideration as more conventionally literary ones. The network of issues raised here, of a dazzling range, and set off by carefully researched examples of text and image, is in a sense

so complex as to be irresolvable; the concluding paragraphs have an oddly muted effect, as if announcing themselves unable to do justice to the complexities which the argument has generated. Critical probity ('responsibility to truth', in the author's phrase) characteristically here perhaps outweighs the temptation to insert a neat concluding formula.

Throughout, this volume is a fine testimony to the comprehensiveness of Elizabeth Salter's learning and expertise. Ranging over different periods and genres (the author's interest in devotional writing emerges in the final section, and in a tantalizingly incomplete discussion of the prose works of the *Katherine*-group in Chapter 2), it pulls together literary and art-historical scholarship with the capacity to absorb and communicate esoteric information on topics as diverse as the formal features of Layamon's verse or medieval sheep-diseases. The writing is furthermore distinguished by sensitivity of response and expression, and a respect both for the material considered and for the reader's energy. Elizabeth Salter's vigour of commitment in posing necessary questions and resisting easy solutions is nowhere better demonstrated than in the unfinished sections of the book, whose open-endedness the editors have tellingly not attempted to obscure.

JULIA BOFFEY

MARGARET OF YORK, DUCHESS OF BURGUNDY, 1446-1503. Christine Weightman. 1989. Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., Gloucester/St. Martin's Press, New York. £14.95.

This book is well planned and strong in outline but the interested reader may find it occasionally weak in detail.

The subjects of the chapters are well chosen: Margaret's youth, marriage, position as Duchess of Burgundy during Charles the Bold's life, the disaster of Nancy, her widowhood and influence in the Low Countries, her intrigues against Henry VII and particularly the one on her personal interests. The author is at her best in the opening passages of each section: these are dramatic and interesting. It is unfortunate that some of them get bogged down almost inevitably in a mass of facts, because Margaret and the people around her were very busy and there is too much to tell. The international political scene, the activities of her father, brothers and husband, the problems of Maximilian with his subjects, all take up a lot of room and the sequence of events is not always clear. Every aspect of Margaret's life that one could wish to know about is discussed, however, and all that is generally relevant has been brought together. The last chapter, 'Bibliophile and Reformer', is the most interesting: it is as complete a picture as it is possible to paint of Margaret's character, her careful supervision of her estates, her excellent relations with Maximilian and Philip the Fair, her interest in the *devotio moderna* (surely there are other and newer sources than Huizinga on this?) and her, mainly religious, books.

It is clear the publication of this book fills a gap in the English market and the historiography of the period, but does it fill it adequately? Closer study of a few details reveals that the author's grasp of some aspects of her subject is not always perfect. There are curious erroneous or unsubstantiated statements, and there is a tendency to introduce unexplained words or names. The word 'grails' is used misleadingly for 'graduals' (p.8); Mancini is mentioned without any elucidation (p.142); an unspecified *Chronicle of Flanders* is quoted (p.192); Margaret's ability 'to keep the allegiance of her staff' is illustrated by the single example of Olivier de La Marche — a man who probably didn't know the meaning of the word disloyalty (p.24); Margaret's signature is said to be 'remarkably similar to her brother Richard's', which cannot be maintained by any stretch of the imagination, especially as the signature of Richard used for comparison is the scribal copy in BL Ms. Harl. 433, f. 2b! On page 131 the author says 'the death of Clarence was the first case of fratricide in the House of York', and elsewhere that Wavrin and Commynes were among those vying for the post of official historian to the Burgundian court after Chastellain's death in 1474 (should probably be early 1475), which is unlikely since Wavrin was dead or dying and Commynes had deserted to France two years earlier (p.205).

Another matter that may be of some interest concerns the statement (the source is not given, but it is from Haynin's *Mémoires*) that the subject of the principal tapestry in Margaret's dressing room on her wedding night was 'the good Lucrecia, a popular model of wifely chastity'. It has recently been suggested¹ that this was *not* the Lucretia (of Shakespeare's morbid *Rape of Lucrece*) who was dishonoured by Tarquin and killed herself, but rather, and more fittingly and attractively, the beautiful, virtuous and learned 'Lucrèce' for whose love Gaius Flaminius and Cornelius Scipio contended in Buonaccorso de Montemagno's *Dialogus de Nobilitate* (and Tiptoft's *Declamacion of Noblesse* and the 'interlude' *Fulgens and Lucres*). This work, in Miélot's French translation, *La controverse de noblesse*, was well known at the Burgundian court and this tapestry may be another proof of the popularity of the story.

Several theories that have often been contradicted are repeated here without sufficient qualification. It is, for instance, no longer thought that Memline's *Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine* depicts Mary of Burgundy and Margaret of York in the figures of St. Catherine and St. Barbara, partly because Mary's features in the painting do not resemble those of her effigy in the church of Our Lady at Bruges which have been proved to be true to life (p.77). There is no evidence that the lady in the window seat of Austrian National Library Ms. 1857, f. 14b, is Mary (or Margaret) and it is mere wishful thinking to assume that the view into a church in that same miniature is from Gruuthuse's oratory (p.208). Nor was it Gruuthuse himself who translated or even commented on Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae* (not normally called his '*Consolationes*'), however appropriate it might have been for him to undertake such a work in the last years of his life (p.164).

General shortcomings of the book include its innumerable spelling errors and bibliographical inaccuracies, the confusing and inadequate provision and positioning of the note numbers in the text, a lack of cross-reference to the illustrations and the poor quality of many of these. Why are there so few pictures when several attractive ones are mentioned in the text? Why not use the charming

Mary on horseback and other pictures from the manuscripts of the *Chronicle of Flanders*? Why not a few colour photographs apart from the delightful (but very blue) cover illustration?

For the academic historian, who according to the blurb will welcome the book, it is marred by an impression that more could have been done, more primary sources, printed as well as unprinted, consulted (why, for example, is Despars' *Cronijke* used only once; what of archives in the Netherlands, such as those of Brielle, or the references to Margaret in the Great Wardrobe accounts for 1461-5?) and that some aspects could have been studied more exhaustively (e.g. Margaret's dealings with Thomas Cook, Vasco de Lucena and her 'factors') and with more attention to detail. The author would have done well to have her classical and literary references checked and not only in the instances discussed here.

It is a complicated story in a confusing background — the period is to blame for that. The general reader, however, will not be disappointed: the whole story is there, many interesting data are given, map and genealogical trees are provided and in spite of the above reservations the book is more than 'a springboard for future research' as the author modestly hopes it will at least be.

1. A. J. Vanderjagt, *Qui sa vertu anoblit* . . ., Groningen 1981, p.186 and n.22.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

THE ENGLISH NOBLE HOUSEHOLD, 1250-1600. Good Governance and Politic Rule. Kate Mertes. 1988. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, £27.50.

The study of the noble household is fundamental to the understanding of the master. The medieval domestic establishment was far more than a matter of food and clothing. It was the pivot of noble life for it was here that the politics, logistics and economics of magnate existence were rooted. The middle ages was 'a period of household society', a time when 'the political and administrative life of the country breathed through the movement of magnates and their households' (F. R. H. du Boulay, *An Age of Ambition*, 1970, pp.109, 123-4). Accordingly, historians of individual nobles have given due consideration to the households of their subjects and it could be argued that a general survey of these institutions has been long overdue.

Any assessment of a general kind presents some obvious difficulties. The sources for this study, described as 'truly magnificent', were household ordinances, descriptions and accounts, those day books, chequer rolls, week books, expense accounts and year rolls that the domestic establishment itself produced. This much is obvious but equally vital, given the central position of the household, are the administrative documents that relate to the inheritance as a whole. Hence accounts of receivers, especially receivers-general, contain much information about the movement, funding and supplying of the lord's establishment. The picture is incomplete if study is limited to documents produced by or for the household, as if it moved in some kind of vacuum. Such a deficiency is here apparent particularly in categorical statements about what did

or did not happen. Given the limitation of sources used, the comment, 'siblings, by the accounts' telling at least, appear to have nothing to do with one another' (p.55), can have little meaning and can in any case be disproved by reference to the wider accounts. The second Duke of Norfolk, for example, cared for both his sisters, negotiating the marriage of one and keeping the other living with him after her mother refused to keep her. His receiver-general's accounts provide extensive data about the household vital, in the absence of specific household accounts, for a view of the Mowbray domestic arrangements. These accounts would have given Mertes the falcons for which she could find little evidence (p.49); wine that was specifically defined as 'bastard' and 'Malmsey' before 1450 and not merely described as red or white, as Mertes believed (p.110); and household servants employed in the lord's standing army which she was unable to detect (p.134).

A further problem in attempting a survey is determining exactly what, if anything, is typical. Here the inadequacy of references either in the text or the footnotes is immediately apparent. The decision to make the footnotes 'referential rather than substantive', was extremely unfortunate. With the enormous variety among households specific references are essential for the sake of clarity and precision. For no apparent reason some such references are supplied in a random scatter and are at their least satisfactory where they are for one of two specific examples cited in the text. In the latter, long discussions are frequently presented without reference to particular families, making it impossible to know to what extent the picture is representative.

The author begins with organisation. Questions of how tasks were assigned, how much specialisation existed and who wielded real authority are more easily raised than answered. The problem of variety looms at once and the endless definitions are too loose to have firm meaning. Mertes seems unable to reconcile her own desire to put people in compartments with the reality of fluidity in household structure. No more than the organisation to which they belonged will household members be readily moulded or typecast. A receiver-general cannot be invariably described as 'a knightly member of the lord's affinity' nor his duties be dismissed as merely 'casual' (p.56). The book suffers from endless 'may or may not have' comments which give rise to repetition, contradiction and qualification that bemuse. It is littered with unhelpful and irritating modern comparisons, and anachronisms like the ludicrous suggestion that pantry and buttery servants would have been 'uncorking their bottles' in a period that knew neither the one nor the other (p.40). The text is obscured by words not found in current dictionaries — chancorial, appositively (*sic*) and cator — and with foreign words which are at their least helpful when given in abbreviated form such as one might use purely in transcribing accounts — *recept' denar'* and *recept' forinsec'* (p.87) and at their most perverse in the use of *li* and *ob* for £ and ½d (p.157). Of the other chapters, that on the household as a religious community appeared in 1987 in *People, Politics and Community in the later Middle Ages*, edited by J. Rosenthal and C. Richmond, and nothing new has been added, though at least the paper is properly footnoted.

Potentially the most valuable section of the book is the appendix of household accounts. Here, alas, the reader comes to the crux of the matter, for it can only be assumed that author and/or publisher decided to economise on proof reading. The entire volume is so riddled with historical and typographical errors

as to be rendered unintelligible, untrustworthy and occasionally ridiculous. Over half the pages contain at least one misprint. Historical howlers abound, viz.: Robert Draper is promoted from Luttrell servant to the bishopric of Carlisle (p.229-30), a position he never held; James Goldwell is described as being summoned before the king's council in 1520 though he had died in 1499 (p.130); John Mowbray is described as 'of Berkeley Castle' (p.134), a place with which he had no association whatever and his 1414-15 accounts are dated 1416-17 (p.207); the *Constitutio Domus Regis* of 1135 is dated 1231 (p.10); the nativity of St. John the Baptist is given as 29 instead of 24 June (p.153); and there is that familiar story of William Lord Hastings's men transferring *en masse* to Richard III when their lord was beheaded (p.133). It is repeated more accurately elsewhere, giving the Duck of Buckingham as the beneficiary of Hastings' supporters but this time it is dated 1482 (p.137)! The appendix of accounts is hopelessly inaccurate and therefore of limited value. Typographical errors such as the 'Bodelian Library' and 'Lincon Record Office' may be overlooked; distinctly quirky spelling of names like the Mountford countess of Leicester and Princess Cecil, duchess of York may be endured but reliance upon the references must be avoided. Some are simply incorrect, many are wrongly dated. Incredibly, the author seems unaware of the important distinction between Additional Manuscripts and Egerton Rolls in the British Library. The Towneley Hall Mss are cited without reference to their whereabouts and citations like 'Grossart *Spending*' and 'Harrison *Life Med. Coll*' are wholly unacceptable in a work of this nature.

To say more, and more could assuredly be said, would be tedious. It is highly regrettable that a subject of such significance should have received such shoddy treatment. It is a book that can do credit to neither author nor publisher and the reader must look elsewhere for an authoritative account of the medieval noble household.

ROWENA E. ARCHER

TOURNAMENTS, JOUSTS, CHIVALRY AND PAGEANTS IN THE MIDDLE AGES. Richard Barber and Juliet Barker. 1989. Boydell Press, Woodbridge, £19.95.

This is clearly a 'coffee table book', intended for the general reader rather than for the specialist. It presents to the reader the development of the tournament in all its aspects, from its earliest beginnings before medieval times to its last remaining manifestations in our own day. It gives many accounts of individual events and attempts to place the tournament in a historical, religious, social and literary context. It leans heavily on Barker's earlier *The Tournament in England 1100-1400* (Woodbridge 1986), which is aimed more at the specialist.

Though the prologue declares that 'medieval historians often ignored tournaments' and that scraps of information have had to be gleaned painstakingly from 'account books, letters, the odd note in a chronicle and (with great caution as a last resort) the chivalric romances' (p.2), the authors make extensive use of contemporary historiographical material, cited in the copious notes following the text. These are sometimes not as illuminating as the discerning reader might wish, referring not to the primary source where the information originated but to a

secondary source where it is cited (e.g. p.197 note 85 'Barker p.173' instead of John of Gaunt's Register and a Public Record Office manuscript reference; p.31 note 22 'Loomis pp.118-9' instead of the Brabançon historian Lodewijk van Velthem).

There are, alas, some inaccuracies and misleading interpretations. A reference to Chrétien de Troyes to the effect that in his work the tournament was 'the arena where . . . knights proved their noble blood' and 'displayed the knightly virtues of courage, courtliness and largesse' (p.139) ignores the important fact that most of Chrétien's heroes earn respect and love through solitary quest and endeavour rather than through the superficial show of tournaments. To refer to the *chansons de geste* 'with their dreary round of battles and feuds . . .' (p.20) is surely too dismissive. There is mention of the *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* as 'the chronicle of William Marshal' (p.21), giving the impression it is a chronicle by him whereas it is a biography of him; and one of the Marshal's captives was not 'knocked off his horse by a drainpipe unnoticed by his captor' (p.23) but deliberately grasped at and clung to the drainpipe as an ingenious means of escape. And can Roger IV de Mortimer really be blandly described as the 'mentor' (p.31) of Edward III?

The impressive amount of information amassed by the authors is divided into chapters on geographical regions, on eras, and on particular aspects of the tournament. There are marginal headings which seem rather random: some kings have them, others (equally important) don't, some headings pinpoint specific events ('Milan 1435' p.86) while others seem to provide a kind of *précis* ('Tournaments hardly known in Spain before 1300' p.91). Where clear headings are needed, as in the classification of tournaments into three main types (Chapter 8; p.163), there are not any and it is unclear what the three types are; the glossary does not help: it refers the reader back to Chapter 8.

The bibliography lists a mere seven books (the publication date of Ruth Harvey *Moriz von Craün and the Chivalric World* is wrongly given as 1911, instead of 1961), all bibliographical detail being provided in the Notes. While one would not expect this kind of book to provide a full scholarly bibliography, suggestions for further reading for the layman might have been an attractive feature.

Something seems to have gone wrong with the final collation of the book: all the page references heading the chapters in the Notes are faulty, and the Acknowledgements, placed *after* the text, read as if they came *before* it ('There are certainly errors in what follows . . .' p.214). Otherwise the physical production of the book is good. There are lavish illustrations. Some of the captions lack a date (pp.138, 192, 194, 205) while others only give the title of the work or codex where the illumination appears, so that the reader needs to check the text for a dating (pp.115, 119, 178-9, 181-4, 187).

In spite of such blemishes the book will probably achieve what is, presumably, its aim: a greater awareness on the part of the general public of tournaments and what they stood for, and perhaps an enhanced interest in things medieval. The text reads easily, and it is a pleasant, attractive-looking book to browse in. Its price, given the many colour illustrations and the high cost of books these days, is realistic.

DIANA B. TYSON

THE EARLIEST ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF VEGETIUS' DE RE MILITARI. Edited from Oxford Ms. Bodleian Douce 291. Geoffrey Lester. Middle English Texts 21. Heidelberg 1988. DM130.

Even for the interested reader who would like to know exactly what Richard III read, this edition at nineteen pence a page comes *very* expensive, particularly since he or she will have to do without the attractive marginal decoration that Richard could enjoy and has to be satisfied with a simple word-processed text and one black and white illustration, its caption printed mirror-wise.

The modern reader, however, will have other advantages: the text is based on one of the earlier and the best available of the eleven extant manuscripts (which have all been used for collation), and an introduction on all aspects of Vegetius' work has been provided. The author himself and his popularity in the middle ages and later is discussed — including Charles the Bold's attempt to build a movable tower as described in *De re militari*, which ended in the mud, to the enjoyment of his adversaries, and the making in 1944 of 'a handy pocket-sized edition for any historically minded G.I.' All the manuscripts are briefly described, among them Richard III's copy, BL.Ms.Royal 18 A xii, and the manuscript in private ownership since sold at Sotheby's in June 1989. (A more detailed description of this ms. is in the auction catalogue, item 45; it is now Cambridge University Library Ms. Add. 8706).

No conclusion is reached about the identity of the translator who produced the book for Thomas, Lord Berkeley, in 1408, but the various candidates and their supporters are explained and the rebus that contains his name is illustrated. The translator's approach is discussed: his wordiness and use of doublets, his interpolations, errors and erratic attempts at updating.

The text itself is clearly and simply set out. The Anglo-Saxon letter thorn, so obviously made up of a b and overted p, gives the whole an amateurish look. A minimum of variant readings is given at the foot of each page. The notes are kept to a minimum, too, and one cannot help wishing that more comparative literary, historical and military information was given, but that is clearly not the aim of this edition. The reader can also turn to a glossary — e.g. for such words as *overfleers* (deserters) and *knokkunge* (assaults) — and a bibliography that covers everything. An otherwise useful general index to the text refers to book and chapter numbers only, which means that some searching is inevitable in the case of long chapters.

The middle English translation of this military 'mirror for princes' that was so popular for ten centuries has waited a long time for a generally accessible edition. Though it is a sound and scholarly production, I fear its price will ensure that it will remain rare.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

A HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT: THE MIDDLE AGES. Ronald Butt. 1989. Constable, London, £30.

As an undergraduate a quarter of a century ago, I found the evolution of Parliament in general, and the debate on its medieval origins in particular, of no great interest; even today, contemplating the history of the institution has a powerful soporific effect. In this no doubt reprehensible frame of mind, I approached Ronald Butt's massive book: yet, once I managed (at the third attempt) to get beyond the Witan, reading it proved a far less painful task than I anticipated.

The genesis of the book is illuminating. A former history student and tutor at Oxford University (where English constitutional history for so long reigned supreme), Butt spent most of his career as a political journalist and, in 1967, published *The Power of Parliament* (an evolutionary survey of Parliament in the twentieth century). In this book, the first of two projected volumes covering the history of Parliament from its origins to the present day, he aims 'to describe the growth of the medieval Parliament by placing it in a continuous narrative of political history'. Parliament, he firmly believes, 'emerged and evolved from politics'; it was 'the product of practical politics not an artefact of constitutional theory'; and its importance in the Middle Ages was as 'an agent and instrument in the unfolding of political history'.

A bold undertaking this certainly is: the nearest parallel, as Butt acknowledges, is Bishop William Stubbs' classic three-volume *Constitutional History of England* (published in the 1870s). Stubbs wrote firmly in the Whig tradition; so, in a modified way, does Butt. The book is underpinned by the notion of history as progress and the evolution of Parliament, from small beginnings and punctuated by frequent set-backs, has about it here a powerful air of inevitability. Yet the exercise is worthwhile and, on the whole, successful: Butt's political narrative is clear and vigorous; he has read widely in the secondary literature (even at its most nit-picking!) and, by quoting selectively from primary sources (particularly the *Rotuli Parliamentorum*), he manages to breathe life into the deliberations of individual Parliaments and demonstrate their political significance; and, at appropriate points, he pauses to describe the evolving procedures and practices of the institution. The main danger of his approach, not entirely overcome, is to exaggerate both the political role and importance of Parliament in the Middle Ages.

Parliament's obscure origins are to be found in the notion of consultation by Kings with their greater subjects: in the Witan of Anglo-Saxon times and, even more narrowly, the baronial Council of the Normans. During the twelfth century there emerged the Great Council, a body of somewhat wider composition, and in 1215 came Magna Carta: 'England's first great parliamentary document', declares Butt, although — he adds hastily! — 'Parliament did not exist when it was devised'. It was during the long reign of Henry III that Parliament at last emerged by name, growing out of the Great Council and already performing in embryo the consultation, judicial and taxation functions, which were to remain characteristic of it throughout the later Middle Ages. Knights of the shire were first called for certain in 1254, borough representatives in 1265, and, under Edward I, their

presence became increasingly usual: during Edward's reign, too, Parliament performed an important role in the promulgation of statutes and, in his later years, even began to be employed by the King's magnate critics as an instrument of opposition to the Crown. Edward II, of course, was a disaster: not surprisingly, Parliament's importance increased (Commons as well as Lords, as the *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum* demonstrates) and its crucial role in the King's deposition in 1327 is clear. The fifty year reign of Edward III which followed forms the substantial core of Butt's book: under pressure of the French war the Commons, by making taxation increasingly conditional on the redress of grievances, now not only became an indispensable part of Parliament but also laid the foundations of its future power. Indeed, in the King's last years when everything started to go wrong, Parliament proved itself a formidable vehicle for political opposition: the Good Parliament of 1376, best documented of all medieval Parliaments thanks to a vivid eyewitness-based report in the *Anonimale Chronicle*, criticised the political and financial misconduct of ministers with vigour and even devised the means (impeachment) of bringing them to book. Political opposition to the Crown remained the order of the day in many of the Parliaments of Richard II and Henry IV: the Merciless Parliament of 1388 proved 'one of the most discreditable and vindictive' in English history when destroying Richard II's adherents; while, only too conscious of the King's political insecurity and financial vulnerability, the Commons spoke to Henry IV 'with a degree of bluntness never used to his predecessors' and displayed a forthright self-confidence never again equalled in the fifteenth century. Even Henry V found he needed to handle Parliament with circumspection.

Bishop Stubbs believed that the Lancastrian monarchy embarked on a 'great constitutional experiment' and Lancastrian England saw a 'premature testing of the parliamentary system'. Ronald Butt, rightly, rejects this long discredited thesis. The fifteenth century did, he thinks, witness a consolidation of the position and achievements of the Commons against a background (in Henry VI's time) of aristocratic strife frequently erupting in Parliament: the Commons' right to assent to legislation was irrevocably established and they themselves became popular recipients of petitions; their privileges were widened and strengthened; and they developed a clear 'corporate identity'. Yet the element of opposition in the Commons gradually disappeared as M.P.s more and more acquiesced in the wishes of the Lords (under Henry VI) and the Crown (under the Yorkists). The number of Parliaments diminished as well: during the twenty-three years of Henry IV and Henry V, twenty-two Parliaments were summoned; only seven met altogether during twenty-four years of Yorkist rule. Oddly enough, too, it was Edward IV's success (at any rate after 1475) in doing precisely what the Commons had so frequently urged his predecessors to do — namely, 'live of his own' financial resources without asking for taxation — that helped reduce their political influence. Parliament once more became very much the King's instrument: Speakers were as much Edward's men as servants of the Commons; bills often originated with him or his Council; and Edward himself not only attended Parliament in person from time to time but also on occasion delivered his own speeches from the throne.

Of particular interest to Ricardians, no doubt, is Butt's treatment of Richard III and his sole Parliament. Critical of the King he certainly is, as a 'deeply flawed'

character whose seizure of the throne in 1483 was the 'most criminal of English usurpations', while the 1484 Parliament was a pliant instrument in his hands (thanks, not least, to the election of his own minister William Catesby as Speaker): all its enactments, initiated by King and Council, were simply 'a manifestation of Richard's wish to gain popular approval for his rule'. Yet, before we resort to any neo-Whig wringing of hands at the docility of this and other Yorkist Parliaments, let us remember the satirical remarks of *Mum and the Soothsayer* (written early in Henry IV's reign and, apparently, relating to Richard II's last Parliament). Some members of the Commons, declared this anonymous author:

... sat there like a nought in arithmetic, that marks a place but has no value in itself. Some had supped with simony the previous evening so that the shire they represented lost all value from their presence. Some were tattlers who went to the King and denounced as foes men who were really good friends of his and deserved no blame from King, Council or Commons, if one listened to the very end of their speeches. Some members slumbered and slept and said very little. Some mumbled and stammered and did not know what they meant to say. Some were hired men and would not take any step for fear of their masters. Some were so pompous and dull-witted that they got hopelessly muddled before they reached the close of their speeches.

Clearly, in some respects at least, nothing much has changed during the last six hundred years!

KEITH DOCKRAY

THE BOOK OF HOURS IN MEDIEVAL ART AND LIFE. Roger S. Wieck. 1988. Sotheby's Publications, Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd., London, £22.50.

Each year seems to bring a new book on books of hours. For the most part these are more or less partial facsimiles of *éditions de luxe*, the commissions of men such as the Duc de Berri or William, Lord Hastings. A concomitant has been a tendency to focus on the miniatures, mentally excising the text in the manner of Ruskin. Even John Harthan's general study of 1977 falls into these traps. The student of manuscripts seeking information about books of hours has had to extract it from scattered sources: Henry Littlehales's studies of the English primer, published in the 1890s; Falconer Madan's flawed tests for localising texts; the well-documented survey of *horae* in the Bibliothèque Nationale by Victor Leroquais; and monographs on individual manuscripts. There is as yet no detailed study of the origins of the book of hours and no modern critical edition of the Sarum Hours, the most commonly read text in late medieval England. However, the process of initial exploration has now been made immeasurably easier as a result of an exhibition held at the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, in April-July 1988. Sotheby's are to be congratulated on making the catalogue available to a wider audience.

Of the three introductory essays the most stimulating is that by Virginia

Reinburg on 'Prayer and the Book of Hours'. She correctly stresses the informal but intimate knowledge of Latin possessed by the late medieval laity and the flexible way in which they could draw on the book of hours to sanctify their daily life. The very act of gazing on an image such as the Mass of St. Gregory was a form of prayer. The main part of the book consists of a survey of the main components of books of hours: Calendar, Gospel Lessons, Hours of the Virgin, Hours of the Cross, Hours of the Holy Spirit, *Obsecro te* and *O intemerata*, Penitential Psalms and Litany, Accessory Texts, Suffrages, and Office of the Dead. Each chapter is illustrated by a wide variety of examples. That on the Office of the Dead is particularly noteworthy for its excellent treatment of iconography. Another of the many pleasures of this book is the quality of both the coloured and black-and-white illustrations. Then there is a valuable essay by John Plummer, who demonstrates how a careful analysis of textual idiosyncrasies can lead to the localization of a manuscript. Useful appendices give, amongst other things, incipits for the Hours of the Virgin of the use of Rome and the Office of the Dead of the use of Paris. Finally there is the catalogue proper, which provides basic codicological information, principal contents and iconography of each of the 119 manuscripts exhibited.

The exhibition drew largely on the collection formed by Henry Walters, and therein lies the strength and the weakness of the book. The Walters Art Gallery has one of the richest collections of *horae* in the world, ranging in date from the third quarter of the thirteenth century to the 1520s. But it is an art gallery, without any of those unillustrated books of hours which often comprise idiosyncratic selections of texts. Furthermore Henry Walters was primarily interested in French manuscripts; the English items in his collection entered almost by chance. Of the four English books included, only two, the bizarre late thirteenth century MS. W.102 and the outstanding but imperfect Butler Hours (W.105) of the early 1340s come from Baltimore. No fewer than 77 of the exhibits are of French origin. This bias leads to some potentially misleading generalizations. In the introduction Roger Wieck states that typically an *horae* consists of eight parts. However, the Gospel Lessons and the Hours of the Holy Spirit are only rarely found in English books. The presence of the former is often a sign of French influence. On the other hand, English *horae* contain items rarely found abroad, such as the Gradual Psalms and the Commendation of Souls. The English, perhaps out of innate conservatism, retained a taste for the Psalter-Hours long after the late 13th century *terminus ad quem* for this combination of texts cited on page 28. Fifteenth-century examples include books executed for John, Duke of Bedford, Henry Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, and Anne Stafford, Duchess of Buckingham.

In a catalogue with such a wide scope it is inevitable that there should be errors, especially of attribution. The Flemish manuscripts are less satisfactorily categorized than the French, where the organizers were able to draw on the expertise marshalled for the exhibition *The Last Flowering*, held at the Pierpont Morgan Library in 1982. The Master of Guillebert de Mets must be distinguished from the artist of the exquisite Hours of Daniel Rym (MS. W.166). An examination of the plates illustrating nos. 87-92 will soon reveal that the term 'Gold Scrolls group' is so loose as to be meaningless. No. 97, for which an origin in the circle of Philippe de Mazerolles is suggested, is almost certainly a Mons product, as both style and liturgy indicate. One of the English representatives, MS. Richardson 34

in the Houghton Library at Harvard, is surely later than c.1470. The costume of the man at bottom right in figure 47 suggests a date in the 1480s.

However, a catalogue of errors gives the wrong impression of this book. For every fault there are numerous fascinating insights into the structure and function of the book of hours.

NICHOLAS ROGERS

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.

ARTICLES

Christopher Allmand, France-Angleterre à la Fin de la Guerre de Cent Ans: Le 'Boke of Noblesse' de William Worcester, in *La 'France anglaise' au Moyen Age*, Colloque des historiens médiévistes français et britanniques, Actes du IIIe Congrès national de Sociétés savantes (Poitiers 1986), Section d'histoire médiévale et de philologie, tome 1, Paris 1988, pages 103-111.

Places the *Boke* in context: basing his knowledge on events in the distant and recent past the antiquary Worcester in 1451-2 believed that France could be recovered by the English to the glory and profit of the King and his nobles and knights. By the time the extant ms. of his work was produced in c.1475 more realistic views were also held.

Mark Ballard and C. S. L. Davies, Étienne Fryon: Burgundian Agent, English Royal Secretary and 'Principal Counsellor' to Perkin Warbeck, *Historical Research*, volume 62, number 149, October 1989, pages 245-259.

Describes the career of an amazingly ubiquitous Burgundian, who became French secretary to Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII, served Charles VIII of France and, while in the latter's service, got involved with Perkin Warbeck. Because of his previous connection with Margaret of York the authors think that this involvement suggests the Duchess not only supported Simnel, but also had a hand in training the second Yorkist pretender from an early stage. This would agree with Bernard André's and the official English version of events as it was further developed by Buck and Walpole, in which Margaret appears as 'principal instigator' and Fryon as 'principal counsellor' of Warbeck.

When Fryon had only just been made Edward IV's secretary he sent a long personal letter to Jean Gros, a leading Burgundian official and former associate, in which he wrote much intriguing important as well as seemingly trivial information. The letter is printed in full and discussed.*

James A. Brundage, *The Medieval Advocate's Profession*, *Law and History Review*, volume 6, number 2, Fall 1988, pages 439-464.

Traces the development of this much maligned profession in Italy, France and England, its associations and monopolies, c.1200 to c.1500. Rules of conduct and schedules of fees were drawn up by popes, emperors and kings. Disciplining of lawyers was left to their clients and the public authorities and was both inefficient and inadequate. The extent of the criticism of the profession leads the author to pose the paradox: it was criticism which encouraged lawyers to form professional associations in self-defence rather than any desire to promote ethical standards or discipline their erring fellows.

Myriam Cheyns-Condé, *Expression de la Piété des Duchesses de Bourgogne au XVe Siècle dans la Vie quotidienne et dans l'Art. Essai de Synthèse*, in *La dévotion moderne dans es pays bourguignons et rhénans des origines à la fin du XVIe siècle*, edited by J.-M. Cauchies, pages 47-63. Publication du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes (XIVe-XVIe s.) number 29 — 1989, (Rencontres de Colmar-Strasbourg, 1988), Neuchâtel 1989.

Lists briefly the visible evidence of the piety of Margaret of Flanders, Isabel of Portugal, Margaret of York and Mary of Burgundy: their lifestyle, participation in pilgrimages and processions, relations with religious orders and the works of art they ordered and donated. Interesting on Margaret of York. Illustrated. A bibliography is given at the end but no clear references made to it in the text.

Costume, number 23, 1989.

Contains: Aagot Noss, 'With one foot in the middle ages. Hose of homespun and other types of footwear in . . . Tinn in Telemark, Norway,' — an examination of medieval methods that survived till the 1960s; with patterns. Geoffrey Egan, 'Leaden seals for textiles,' — an examination of surviving alnage seals used to certify cloths, including medieval ones.

Jean-Philippe Genet, *L'Influence française sur la Littérature politique anglaise au Temps de la France anglaise*, in *La 'France anglaise' au Moyen Age*, Colloque des historiens médiévistes français et britanniques, Actes de IIIe Congrès national des Sociétés savantes (Poitiers 1986), Section d'histoire médiévale et de philologie, tome 1, Paris 1988, pages 75-90.

Traces the 'decline' of French in England and the effect of the close contact between the ruling classes of both countries during the Hundred Years War and concludes that because of the socio-linguistic situation the influence from France in the field of practical and theoretical political literature was important, but that at the same time original 'nationalist', legal and, up to c.1450, theological (Wycliffite) ideas were also thriving.

Joan W. Kirby, *A Fifteenth-Century Family, the Plumpton of Plumpton, and their Lawyers, 1461-1515*, *Northern History*, volume 25, 1989, pages 106-119.

Includes an examination of the famous inheritance dispute settled by the arbitration of Richard III in 1483, and reopened by the unscrupulous Richard Empson in the reign of Henry VII. How the family cultivated friends in the right places and within the legal system, and who these friends were.*

Colin Richmond, The Death of Edward V, *Northern History*, volume 25, 1989, pages 278-280.

A new date for the 'murder' of the Princes: 22 June 1483 (*sic*). Based on the evidence of a cartulary written in 1509.*

J. A. F. Thomson, Wealth, Poverty and Mercantile Ethics in late Medieval London, in *La Ville, la Bourgeoisie et la Genèse de l'État Moderne (XIIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, edited by J.-Ph. Genet and N. Bulst, Éditions du CNRS, Paris, 1988, pages 265-278.

The conflict between the church's ideal of poverty and the acquisitive habits of the medieval townsman. An examination of how this affected London merchants, under three main headings: stewardship of wealth, forms of poverty approved by merchant, and the church's influence on mercantile practice (especially usury and Sunday work). In general the church's teaching was obeyed; a spirit of accommodation existed on both sides.

THE FIELD OF REDEMORE

(THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH, 1485)

by

Peter J. Foss

author of

The History of Market Bosworth

FOREWORD

by

Ralph A. Griffiths

Professor of Medieval History, University College of Swansea

Available at £3.95 and 50p p. & p., from The Rosalba Press,
c/o 55 St. Michael's Lane, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3BR.

Notes on Contributors

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Michael Hicks. Senior Lecturer in History, King Alfred's College, Winchester. Author of *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence* (1980) and editor of *Profit, Piety and the Professions in later Medieval England* (1990).

H. A. Kelly is Vice-Chairman of the Department of English at the University of California, Los Angeles. Among his historical studies is 'English Kings and the Fear of Sorcery', *Mediaeval Studies* 1977.

Nicholas Rogers is Archivist at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He has published numerous articles on various aspects of medieval art and culture.

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.

Barrie Williams. Head of History and Chaplain at St. Hilda's School, Whitby. Author of *The Bishops' Subscription Book*, *The Franciscan Revival* and *The Work of Archbishop Williams*.

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).

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