

Book Reviews

NORTH-EASTERN ENGLAND DURING THE WARS OF THE ROSES: LAY SOCIETY, WAR AND POLITICS 1450-1500. A. J. Pollard. 1990. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £45.

North-Eastern England during the later fifteenth century has attracted much attention in recent years, not least from historians of Richard III. Paul Murray Kendall's 1955 biography of the King, for instance, contained much of interest on the north (especially Yorkshire): indeed, drawing on Harleian Ms. 433 in particular, Kendall pioneered areas of investigation (such as Richard III's employment of northerners in southern England) exhaustively examined since. Even more important was the contribution of Charles Ross who not only wrote about the north himself in his biographies of the Yorkist Kings but also inspired others to do so as well. Among them was A. J. Pollard who, over the years, has published a series of important articles on northern politics and society. Now he has produced a definitive history of the north east and its inhabitants during the Wars of the Roses.

Like Richard III himself, A. J. Pollard, after many years living, teaching and studying in the north east, has developed a considerable empathy with his adopted home and he demonstrates this over and over again in this splendid book. He has consulted an impressive range of manuscript material (including hitherto neglected Durham records); he knows the printed sources inside out and frequently reinterprets their contents (for instance, the letters and papers of the West Riding family of Plumptre); and he has read comprehensively in secondary works, showing characteristic generosity in acknowledging his indebtedness not only to recent scholars (such as Michael Hicks and Rosemary Horrox) but also fine antiquarian studies (like T.D. Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire*). Moreover, while displaying a formidable scholarship throughout, he never ceases to be both readable and thought-provoking.

Gone here is the notion that the north east, 'a region which overlaid its constituent counties in the late fifteenth century', was a remote, poverty-stricken corner of England: on the contrary, Pollard argues, it was neither closed nor isolated from the rest of the country; many north-easterners of substance had interests elsewhere (not least in London); and, although strong southern hostility to the north was indeed generated by events during the civil wars, England never became two nations. Economically, a short-lived recovery in the early fifteenth century was abruptly reversed by a severe agrarian crisis at the end of the 1430s and, by the 1450s, the region was in deep recession. Even as late as 1500, in contrast to the midlands and south, there was little sign of sustained recovery. Economic problems, moreover, had important political implications: for instance, declining revenues from land in the 1440s, accompanied by ever fiercer competition for favour and office at the Lancastrian Court, helped generate the

bitter Neville/Percy feud of the early 1450s and this, in turn, had considerable relevance in explaining the outbreak of civil war; similarly, economic stagnation in the late 1470s and early 1480s may partially explain the support for, and expectations of, Richard Duke of Gloucester evident among so many sections of north-eastern society. Certainly, the great lords of the north wielded powerful influence throughout much of the century and this meant, in particular, the Nevilles of Middleham and the Percy Earls of Northumberland: moreover, these mighty aristocrats enjoyed, for the most part, clear zones of influence and their affinities, perhaps unusually in fifteenth-century England, were characterised by a notable degree of continuity, unity and solidarity (at any rate until 1485). In fact, as Pollard suggests, political loyalty to a Percy or a Neville (or, indeed, Richard of Gloucester as heir to the Middleham connection) probably reflected the deeply conservative mentality of northern society, a conservatism indicated, as well, by the continued devotion of north-eastern gentlemen to the traditions of chivalry, the chase and conventional piety ('worrying about purgatory and taking precautions to reduce the time they might find themselves suffering there'), and a conservatism shared by that 'exemplar of northern chivalry' Richard of Gloucester in whom 'we surely can observe a personal, knowledgeable and sincere piety'.

Dr Pollard's discussion of the north east, politics and war in the second half of the fifteenth century is awesome in detail, well-balanced yet incisive in interpretation. Anglo-Scottish relations and their importance in northern history are rightly stressed, not least in the early 1460s (when Lancastrian rebels lost support because they joined forces with the Scots) and the final years of Edward IV (when Richard of Gloucester clearly enhanced his reputation by successfully campaigning against the old enemy). No less central to understanding both north-eastern and national politics during the Wars of the Roses is evaluation of the role and rivalry of Percy and Neville. Rejecting the notion that the Percy/Neville feud was already well-established by 1450, Pollard convincingly suggests, instead, an unexpected if rapid deterioration in relations in 1453, the result *not* of equality of power ('There was but one overmighty family in north-eastern England in 1450: the Nevilles of Middleham') but Percy fear of permanent subordination in face of 'remorseless aggrandizement' by the Neville clan. Overt Neville ambitions in a hitherto traditionally Percy zone (the East Riding of Yorkshire) soon led to violent conflict; the competing parties at Henry VI's Court were drawn in; and, when Henry Percy second Earl of Northumberland was killed at St. Albans in 1455, 'a deadly blood feud (was) set in motion from which there could be no turning back'. Moreover, although the Percies enjoyed a brief period of ascendancy in the months following Ludford in 1459 (and avenged, at Wakefield, the death of the second Earl when Richard Neville Earl of Salisbury bit the dust), the change of dynasty in 1461 and the death of the third Earl of Northumberland at Towton put the Nevilles even more firmly in the driving seat of north-eastern politics. By 1465, in fact, Warwick the Kingmaker and his brothers were pre-eminent not only in Yorkshire but in Durham and Northumberland as well: even that staunch Percy man Sir William Plumpton, Pollard argues, found it prudent to come to terms with the new reality and this may well explain his strained relationship with the restored fourth Percy Earl in the early 1470s. Certainly, during the crisis of 1469-1471, Warwick's powerful

north-eastern affinity played a pivotal role: firstly, in enabling the Kingmaker to capture Edward IV (1469) and restore Henry VI (1470); then, in 1471, by failing to prevent either Warwick's defeat and death at Barnet or the Yorkist King's successful recovery of the throne.

In 1471 the independent power of the Nevilles in north-eastern England was broken and, by about 1480, Richard of Gloucester had established a regional hegemony eclipsing even that enjoyed by Warwick. In the process he re-united north-eastern society, created a formidable personal following and brought a degree of stability to the region not seen since 1453. Even so, by May 1483, he felt himself dangerously vulnerable in the political situation occasioned by his brother's premature death (not least on account of his insecure title to so many of his estates). This, declares Pollard, provided 'the political and personal context in which he took the fateful step of seizing the throne for himself' and Richard III's successful usurpation, in turn, proved a critical juncture for both region and realm. Instead of the kingdom's unity being undermined (as seemed only too likely when Edward IV created a hereditary palatinate for his brother in the north west early in 1483), Richard III, as King, brought all his landed possessions to the Crown and thereby ensured both the strengthening of the realm's integrity and the prospect of a reassertion of royal control in the regions (especially the north east). Henry VII, indeed, built on foundations laid not by Edward IV but by Richard III. Of course, north-easterners provided a substantial part of the platform from which Richard launched his bid for the throne in 1483; they did indeed benefit considerably from his patronage as King and, in the aftermath of Buckingham's rebellion, the plantation of northerners in southern England was a reality; and when, in his last months, Richard sought to consolidate his position by bringing Woodvilles into the fold, it was inevitably at the price of a weakening of northern support (perhaps crucial at Bosworth). Certainly, too, Henry VII did face early hostility in the north east (particularly at a popular level). Yet, paradoxically, the fourth Earl of Northumberland's untimely death at the hands of a Yorkshire mob in 1489 proved, in the end, an opportunity not a set-back. Thomas Howard Earl of Surrey, the King's chief representative in the north during the 1490s, had the double advantage from Henry's point of view of being both an outsider (who, unlike Warwick in 1469/70 or Gloucester in 1483, could not mount a challenge to the centre from a personal northern power-base) and a man of previously impeccable Ricardian credentials: just the man to help ensure, in fact, that by the end of the century the north east had at least been largely tamed and royal authority re-established.

Such a bald and incomplete summary as that provided in these few paragraphs can in no way do justice either to A. J. Pollard's powerful thesis or his magnificent scholarship. What it might do, hopefully, is to encourage fellow members of the Society to enjoy the fruits of Pollard's long years of labour as much as the present reviewer.

KEITH DOCKRAY

JEAN FROISSART AND THE FABRIC OF HISTORY. TRUTH, MYTH, AND FICTION IN THE *CHRONIQUES*. Peter F. Ainsworth. 1990. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £35.

The main thrust of this careful and impressive study, in which many of the techniques of Critical Theory are extensively used, is an investigation of 'the specifically literary qualities of Froissart's *Chroniques*'. Ainsworth argues that there is more in these than the stylistic and rhetorical properties which have interested earlier generations of literary scholars and that the *Chroniques* 'have much more to offer than this': that they 'can be shown to embody a more sophisticated reading experience than might hitherto have been thought likely'. He thus presents the *Chroniques* 'as a developing sequence of discourse, in all its diversity and richness' and subjects this to 'an extended piece of interpretative criticism at close textual quarters'. Some readers might find parts of this *régime de lecture*, with its concern for 'textes de connotation', framed or embedded narratives, metonymic connections, metaphoric equivalences, and so on, rather taxing, even occasionally artificial and contrived. But the principal result of this approach (at least from a mere historian's point of view) is indeed important and a sober warning, should we still be tempted, against simple acceptance of the *Chroniques* at face value. As Ainsworth demonstrates with regard to one of the most famous of all the episodes in the *Chroniques*, Froissart's *voyage* to Béarn and the court of Gaston Fébus of Foix, many parts of the work must be read as 'a questing, mythopoeic narrative', which sits provocatively 'betwixt the Muse of History and her poetic Sisters' (p.170). Deeply conservative Froissart may have been; simple and straightforward as a commentator on his times he certainly is not.

The shortcomings of Froissart's work as an historical source have, of course, been exposed for many generations, especially thanks to the meticulous investigations of Siméon Luce and his successors since 1867 in the still-continuing effort to publish the definitive edition for the Société de l'histoire de France of his vast compilation (more than three million words in its various recensions). The current editors' task will not have been made easier by Ainsworth's account: the extent to which Froissart's imagination and literary skill worked on his materials can now be fully appreciated. Some may even wonder whether the attempt to tease out 'historical' details from a text that must be read in many registers is still worth pursuing in the circumstances! Froissart is building 'images' (like his portrait of Edward III, discussed here in some detail) quite as much as searching for 'truth'.

In this respect Froissart's authorial talents reached their apotheosis in the famous Rome manuscript (written c.1399 and conveniently available in George Diller's splendid edition, Geneva, 1972), in which the writer went over for the last time the section of his *Chroniques* dealing with the earliest phases of the Hundred Years War down to 1350. Here Ainsworth demonstrates in convincing fashion how Froissart's ideas had changed under the impact of the Anglo-French conflict, as a result of all those 'bold deeds' he had initially set out to record: 'it is a text in which one senses the conflation of at least two generations . . . in which the idealized chivalric values of a recent, glorious past are depicted alongside more "modern" (though surely universal) values such as opportunism, pragmatism,

and cynical self-advancement'. These Ainsworth sees as being presented to the reader for his own 'perusal and exploration rather than for "judgment"'. Many readers will find discussion of this moral dimension of the *Chroniques* one of the most interesting aspects of this sympathetic and instructive commentary on one of the most celebrated of all medieval works, but one which on this showing now has less claim than ever to be considered the work of an historian.

MICHAEL JONES

POEMS OF CUPID, GOD OF LOVE. Christine de Pizan's *Epistre au dieu d'Amours* and *Dit de la Rose*, Thomas Hoccleve's *The Letter of Cupid*. Editions and Translations, with George Sewall's *The Proclamation of Cupid*. Edited by Thelma S. Fenster and Mary Carpenter Erler. 1990. E. J. Brill, Leiden, fl. 104.

Christine de Pizan wrote the *Epistre au dieu d'Amours*, a letter in defence of women addressed by the God of Love to his courtiers, in 1399. The *Dit de la Rose* was produced three years later, and describes within a dream framework the founding of an imaginary chivalric order, on the instructions of the God of Love and Lady Loyalty, dedicated to upholding 'l'honneur des dames'. Both poems concern themes which were also debated in the contemporary public 'querelle' over *Le Roman de la Rose*, a work about which the exasperated sender of the *Epistre* exclaims 'Quel long proces! Quel difficile chose!' (line 390). The exchange set Christine and Jean Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, against Jean de Montreuil and the brothers Col, royal secretaries and figures of civic importance. Thomas Hoccleve's English version of the *Epistre*, which reduces it by almost a half of its length, was made in 1402, with a speed which suggests that the French poem had quickly established some reputation. The English translation was to remain in circulation throughout the fifteenth century, and was eventually incorporated in printed editions of Chaucer's works amongst the so-called 'Chaucer apocrypha'. This welcome anthology by Thelma S. Fenster and Mary Carpenter Erler gives the reader a sense of the range of late medieval notions about sexual roles, and offers stimulating and thoroughly researched accounts of poems by two writers who are currently attracting considerable critical attention.

The texts have all been freshly edited, and the choice of base manuscripts takes account of recent scholarship which has revised the dating of the manuscripts of Christine de Pizan's works and emphasized her close involvement in their production. The *Epistre* is here edited from British Library Ms. Harleian 4431, the sumptuous 'manuscrit de la reine' produced for Queen Isabelle, and the *Dit* from Chantilly Ms. Condé 492 (the earlier standard edition by Roy had used Bibliothèque Nationale Fr. 835 and Fr. 604). Hoccleve's *Letter* is presented in the text of the holograph Huntington Ms. HM 744, used by Gollancz for an Early English Text Society edition, but here reproduced with more respect for the author's own punctuation. A full apparatus of rejected readings, variants, and textual notes accompanies each poem, together with French and English glossaries, an index of proper nouns, and extensive bibliographies. The

individual introductions set the poems in detailed historical and literary context and draw illuminating comparisons, and an appendix presents George Sewell's eighteenth-century *Proclamation of Cupid*, a verse translation of Hoccleve's Middle English *Letter*.

The decision to supply modern verse translations of the *Epistre*, *Dit*, and *Letter* alongside all the scholarly editorial detail may seem at first sight eccentric, but is presumably to be explained by the breadth of appeal which these texts are felt to hold. Hoccleve and Christine are likely to interest historians and palaeographers, and their works have begun to generate immense literary-critical energy. The translations are in general lively, close, and accurate. No attempt is made at rhyme in the translations of the French poems, with the decasyllabic lines of the *Epistre* rendered in iambic pentameter, and the octosyllabic lines of the *Dit* in iambic tetrameter, but Hoccleve's challenging rhyme royal stanzas are however maintained. Some thought has been given to the choice of appropriate idioms ('these toasty evening fires' for 'au grans feus a ces soirs' in line 125 of the *Epistre* was one of the few which gave me a moment's pause), and to witty rhymes in the final couplets of the stanzas of the *Letter*. The translations confirm the general flavour of informed and discriminating enthusiasm which this book conveys. My only complaints about it are that the fuzzy black and white photographs do not do justice to the splendour of the manuscript pages which they reproduce, and that the high price of the volume may prevent it reaching the wide readership which it deserves.

JULIA BOFFEY

THE BRUSSELS HORLOGE DE SAPIENCE. Iconography and text of Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale ms IV 111. Peter Rolfe Monks. 1990. E. J. Brill, Leiden, fl. 85.

The Dominican Heinrich Suso, a follower of the mystic Meister Eckart, composed the Latin *Horologium Sapientiae* in about 1334 for a community of nuns. The work was based on his earlier work *Das Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit*, and its popularity was only overshadowed by Thomas à Kempis' *Imitatio Christi* in the fifteenth century. Künzle's definitive study of the *Horologium* text, published in 1977, identifies 233 complete manuscript copies of the work dating from the later middle ages; there is further evidence of eighty-eight other texts now lost, and some 150 surviving extracts of varying lengths. The work recounts how *Dame Sapience* reveals to the disciple the pitfalls of worldly life and the spiritual treasure available to those following Christ and seeking the joys of heaven. The text was translated into French, Flemish, German, Italian, English, Swedish, Danish, Polish and Czech.

The first French translation was made in c. 1389 at the instigation of Nicole de Port, a counsellor of Henry, Duc de Bar. Only five manuscripts of the French text dating from before c. 1450 have any illuminated miniatures, despite being owned by, for example, the daughter of the Duc de Berri and Philippe le Bon.

Monks follows earlier authorities in dating the Brussels manuscript of the French translation with its appended texts by Jean Gerson to the 'mid-fifteenth century'. His aim is to discuss above all the abundant illustrations that decorate the twenty-four chapters of the manuscript, some thirty-five separate compositions comprising, as the author remarks, 108 discrete scenes.

Who commissioned this densely illustrated manuscript and who devised the pictorial programme? In an exhaustive examination of the views and remarks of previous scholars, Monks accepts the identification of Guillaume Couffier (c.1420-1495) as the first known owner, on heraldic evidence (Couffier's arms were over-painted with those of the dukes of Brittany later in the fifteenth century). He speculates that the manuscript was a gift from the King, Charles VII, on the occasion of Couffier's marriage to Louise d'Amboise in 1450, arguing from the likely date of the manuscript and the fact that the King's confessor, Robert Baygard, was a Dominican. Whether either Couffier or Baygard had any part in the commissioning of the manuscript is just not possible to say. Monks in fact assumes that the illuminators, the Master of Jean Rolin II for the *Horloge* text and the Chief Associate of the Bedford Master for the Gerson texts, created the iconography: 'The fact that a single artist was entrusted with the extensive programme [of the *Horloge*] must surely speak highly about his reputation among fellow painters and clients in the Parisian manuscript trade of the period' (p.37).

What makes the Brussels *Horloge de Sapience* of particular interest is the prefatory 'Declaration des Hystoires', which gives a synopsis of each chapter and explains the contents of each miniature. The French text of each 'Declaration' is published, with a translation into English by K. V. Sinclair; each miniature is reproduced in a black and white plate. The extended description of the pictures recalls the marginal notes occasionally found in manuscript books giving instruction to illuminators for the composition to be added at specific points in the text, and might conceivably derive from such notes. The famous reference to the *egregius pictor Franciscus*, Maître François, shows that this dominating artistic personality in Parisian illumination of the 1470s was in fact being given designs of pictures and an account of what the images signified ('*liniamenta pictuarum et imaginum rationes*') as he was commissioned to illustrate a copy of the *Cité de Dieu*: he was not being left to devise a pictorial programme. Sandra Hindman's 1986 study of the illumination of Christine de Pisan's *Epistre Othéa* manuscripts at the beginning of the fifteenth century concluded similarly that the author rather than the artist was responsible for the iconography involved. This of course argues against Monks' presumption that the artist in the Brussels *Horloge* manuscript devised the programme. Monks notices that the Rolin Master executed the miniatures within an area bounded by a burnished gold fillet, and that the composition sometimes extended over this frame. It was normal for gold to be added first to any illuminated manuscript, so it seems that here the miniaturist is doing the work in a place left bare for the purpose by other artisans. An analysis of the border decoration and comparison with other Rolin Master manuscripts might conceivably have told us whether the miniaturist was collaborating with a settled group of artisans comprising a 'workshop', but this kind of question goes beyond the task that Monks has set himself. What he has produced is a detailed account of the manuscript, and a reproduction of

miniatures with their contemporary commentary that students of devotional texts and illumination will find very useful.

ROWAN WATSON

CLERKS OF THE CLOSET IN THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD. John Bickersteth and Robert W. Dunning. 1991. Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., Stroud. £35.

The earliest reference to the office of clerk of the closet apparently occurs in the reign of Henry VI — although, given the paucity of the sources, it would be rash to assume that this was literally its beginning. The clerk was then the official responsible for the equipment of the royal closet, that is, the oratory in which the king made his private devotions, as distinct from the more formal splendours of the chapel royal. From the outset, the clerks' closeness to the king probably made the office a desirable stepping stone to higher preferment; but by the sixteenth century it is clear that the clerk was well on the way to being seen as someone of importance in his own right.

The religious dimension of the royal household has always tended to receive less attention than the secular side, except in so far as it spawned government 'departments' such as the chancery, and this book is a useful step towards redressing the balance. But it must be said that medievalists will find it disappointing. The place of the chapel in the household before Henry VI is treated only sketchily. Few of the early holders of the clerkship have been traced and relatively little biographical information is provided about them. It is only as the story comes closer to the present day that the book gets into its stride.

Only three pre-Tudor clerks are named: one (Edward Atherton) under Henry VI and two under Edward IV: William Savage, for whom no biographical detail is provided, and Alexander Legh. No clerk is named for Richard III's reign. The problem is that, at this stage in the history of the clerkship, the office was held by someone setting out on a career in royal service — who was unlikely to be mentioned in any other context in the royal records. Thus, for instance, almost everything known about Alexander Legh postdates his time as clerk.

Given the absence of household lists for the second reign of Edward IV or for the reign of Richard III, it is unlikely that the personnel of the king's chapels during that period will ever be traced in full, although a partial list of chaplains and gentlemen of the chapel can be put together from references in royal grants. It is also just possible, although far from proven, that there is extant a partial list of the chapel royal before Richard III's accession. At the beginning of his reign, on 18 July, Richard ordered payment to be made to seventeen men, including four priests and two masters of arts, for their service to 'oure derrest Brothere late kinge whoome god absoille and to Edward Bastard late called king Edward the Vth'.¹ The nature of that service is not stated, but two of the men were servants of the chapel in Richard's own reign. John Melyonek, the second name in the list, was then a gentleman of the chapel, in which capacity he was rewarded with a corrody in Bodmin priory in April 1484. He later appears recruiting musicians for the chapel royal.² The list also includes John Buntynge, who was yeoman of the

vestry under Richard III, by whom he was rewarded with a corrody at Monmouth.³ If this suggestion is correct, then the Master Smith who appears in the list might be the Henry Smith, gentleman of the chapel, rewarded with a tenement in Warwick in March 1484, but the name is too common to be of much use as evidence.⁴

Much clearly remains to be done in reconstructing Richard's spiritual household — the backdrop for his exercise of the role of Christian prince on which he placed such emphasis. Although the present authors have been unable to fill one particular gap, their work gives a well-directed nudge towards further exploration of the late-medieval closet and chapel royal.

NOTES

1. R. Horrox and P. W. Hammond, eds. *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433* (4 vols, Upminster and London, 1979-83) vol. 2, p.2. The money was to be paid from Tutbury but the warrant does not appear in the enrolled duchy of Lancaster warrants for the reign: PRO, DL 42/20.
2. PRO, Signed bills, C 81/1530/39; *Harl. 433*, vol. 2, p.163.
3. *Harl. 433*, vol. 1, p.235; PRO DL 42/20 fo.66-66v.
4. *Harl. 433*, vol. 2, p.122.

ROSEMARY HORROX

THE OVERSEAS TRADE OF LONDON: EXCHEQUER CUSTOMS ACCOUNTS 1480-1. Edited by H. S. Cobb. London Record Society, Volume 27, 1990. £20. Available from the Hon. Sec. LRS, c/o Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet St., London WC1 7HU.

The discovery of new historical information depends heavily on the study and interpretation of documentary evidence surviving from our ancestors' business, legal and personal affairs. Publication of transcripts, translations, summaries and indexes of historical documents enable a much wider readership to work on or simply enjoy the 'raw material' of research than those few who have the time or skills to spend on the originals. Such publications are rarely a 'commercial proposition' and must rely on the support of learned societies, educational trusts and, occasionally, enlightened government departments. Many readers of *The Ricardian* have supported the activities in this field of the Richard III Society and latterly the Richard III and Yorkist History Trust.

The volume reviewed here is the welcome production of another society and a model of its type. The source documents are the Exchequer Customs Accounts now preserved at the Public Record Office at Chancery Lane, London. As the term might suggest, the customs accounts were prepared by the collectors and other officers of the royal service for submission to the auditors of the Court of Exchequer to demonstrate the proper discharge of their duties as collectors of taxation on the import and export of merchandise through the authorised Customs Ports.

The accounts contain a wealth of detail. This varies but may typically include for each ship, its type (spinace, batella, carvel etc.), its home port, the master's name and the date of arrival or departure. Normally each major item of cargo is detailed separately including the merchant's name and status (native,

alien, Hanse, Spanish etc. for tax rating), the name or description of the commodity, the quantity, its value and the 'customary' duty and/or 'subsidy' paid.

This information is clearly of value for maritime and economic statistical studies as well as for tracing the activities of merchants and others prominent in local and national affairs and for genealogical research particularly if a thorough index is provided as in this volume. As an example, the index efficiently reveals eight instances of Edward Brampton's activities as a merchant exporting cloth in Portuguese and English ships. Similarly the relative importance of trade with Venice and Genoa can be sampled by way of the relevant entries in Mr Cobb's admirable general index. He has also provided a separate glossary and index of commodities which in most cases will avoid the need to refer to other glossaries such as that in *The Coronation of Richard III* for unfamiliar terms.

The book opens with an introduction outlining the development of the English Customs system and the organisation or bureaucracy that had developed by the period 1461-1509 of principal interest to the editor and ourselves. There follows a discussion of the customs hierarchy and the sort of men who occupied the posts in the Yorkist and early Tudor periods. The introduction continues with anecdotal essays on the compilation and audit of the accounts, their statistical reliability with reference to the problem of smuggling and a review of the picture of overseas trade provided by this account in the light of earlier research results.

Having been engaged myself in the transcription of the customs accounts of Poole in Dorset, I was interested in comparing trading activity and practice in London with that in the provincial ports. The figures for quantities and values of various commodities are too complex to discuss here but a crude idea of the dominance of London may be gained by comparing Mr Cobb's edition of the London accounts for one year with another recent publication: *The Customs Accounts of Hull 1453-1490* edited by Wendy R. Childs, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, volume 144, Leeds, 1986. In a volume of similar size, Dr Childs was able to include the surviving twenty-eight sets of Hull accounts covering twenty separate years in the late fifteenth century.

Following the introduction, the main body of the present volume (164 pages) consists of Mr Cobb's transcription and translation of the account of 'Thomas Fowler, controller of the petty custom of the Lord King in the port of London in the time of Henry Davers and Robert Fitzherbert collectors of the said petty custom, from the feast of St. Michael in the 20th year of King Edward IV, to the same feast then next following.' This is stuffed full of interesting names and cargoes such as the 'chest with 32 vols. diverse histories' imported on the *Mary of the Steelyard* by Peter Auctoris and the 5½ dozen writing tables, 10 dozen dolls and 2 gross of compasses imported by Martin Johnson on the *Nicholas of London*. Also included for completeness are the summary accounts for wool and wine which were subject to different rates of duty and collected by different officers. However these provide little detail beyond the merchants names and the quantities of each commodity.

Following the main text there is a useful appendix listing the London customs accounts surviving for the period 1461 to 1509 with their Public Record Office call numbers, dates and the document size in terms of the number of folios

or membranes. This shows that whilst the series is far from complete, there remains a vast quantity of original documents which are unfortunately unlikely ever to receive the systematic and skilful treatment applied to 1480-1 by Mr Cobb.

R. C. HAIRSINE

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.

BOOKS

Linda L. Brownrigg (ed.), *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*. 1990. Illustrated. 200 pages. The Red Gull Press, Los Altos Hills, CA. Anderson-Lovelace, 56 Staunton Rd., Oxford OX3 7TP. £62; £29.95 (pbk).

Beautifully produced book containing eleven articles and an introduction ranging from the eleventh to fifteenth century: aspects of book design, art history, paleography and commercial activities of members of the book trade.

Lindy Grant (ed.), *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in London*, The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions for the Year 1984. Illustrated. 172 pages. 1990. £38 (hdbk), £28.50 (pbk), from W. S. Maney and Son Ltd, Hudson Rd., Leeds LS9 7DL.

Ten contributions covering pre-Norman London, medieval shopping, domestic buildings, the architecture of Old St Paul's, the restoration of the Temple Church, City customs from the Queen Mary Psalter workshop, opus anglicanum, and new fashions in late medieval tombs.

Michael Haren and Yolande de Pontfarcy, *The Medieval Pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg and the European Tradition*. Illustrated. viii and 242 pages. 1988. Enniskillen, Clogher Historical Society, £120.

Articles on various aspects of the pilgrimage to the mysterious 'pit' or cave in Northern Ireland, where the repentant Christian, after obtaining permission from the church, could spend the night and experience both the terrors of purgatory and the delights of the life of the blessed. The place inspired several medieval tales of visits to the afterworld.

Jean Imray, *The Mercers' Hall*, edited by Ann L. Saunders. 509 pages. Illustrated. 1991. London Topographical Society, £60.

Detailed history of the Hall and adjacent buildings in the centre of the City of London on Cheapside; ends in 1958 with the reopening after the 1941 fire. Includes a chapter on the monastery of St. Thomas of Acre and the medieval Hall by Derek Keene with plans reconstructing the area.

ARTICLES

Sydney Anglo, *Le Jeu de la Hache: A Fifteenth-Century Treatise on the Technique of Chivalrous Axe Combat*, *Archaeologia*, volume 109, 1991, pages 113-128.

An important discussion of the techniques of axe fighting, based on a transcription and translation of a French or Burgundian manual of tuition. It contains a description of the pole-axes used and is well illustrated from fifteenth and sixteenth century manuscripts; particularly interesting in view of the traditional use of an axe by Richard III. The axe was never popular as a weapon in England apparently.

Mark Ballard, *An Expedition of English Archers to Liège in 1467, and the Anglo-Burgundian Marriage Alliance*, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, volume 34, 1990, pages 152-74.

One of many similar expeditions which were not only part of the diplomatic game of the time, but also prove the high esteem in which English archers were held. In this particular case the men were used against the rebellious city of Liège and the transaction was 'an expression of good faith' of Edward IV during the negotiations for the marriage of Margaret of York to Charles of Burgundy. Very detailed on the financial aspects and the part played by Tommaso Portinari, the Medici banker, as financier of both sides. Appendices with documents from the archives at Lille (used extensively) and on the identity of 'Jean Auwain' (John Owen).

Louis Cameron, *A Yorkist Genealogical Chronicle in Middle English Verse*, *Anglia*, volume 109, 1991, pages 1-20.

First publication (and discussion) of this manuscript roll in private ownership. It is a unique text but similar to other propagandist works of the time, stating in verse and in detail Edward IV's claim to the throne of England as heir of Cadwallader and Brut, as well as to the crowns of France, Castile and Leon. 'The Ros of Rosys has brought all to rest'.

John M. Currin, *Pierre Le Pennec, Henry VII of England, and the Breton Plot of 1492: A Case Study in 'Diplomatic Pathology'*, *Albion*, volume 23, number 1, Spring 1991, pages 1-22.

Account of the plot — and its failure — to surrender two ports in Brittany to the English and 'liberate' the duchy to help prevent French interference in England. Includes the career of the main Breton agent and emphasises the important position of Brittany in English foreign policy in the later middle ages.

Virginia Davis, *William Waynflete and the Wars of the Roses*, *Southern History*, volume 11, 1989, pages 1-22.

Exposé of the truly episcopal, mediating, intrinsically apolitical career and therefore political survival of this bishop of Winchester (1447-1486), founder of Magdalen College, Oxford, loyal friend to Henry VI personally. 'Not everybody was obsessed by political plotting and scheming'.

M. A. Hicks, *The 1468 Statute of Livery*, *Historical Research*, volume 64, number 153, February 1991, pages 15-28.

Argues that this act was a serious attempt to extend and enforce controls over retaining. Examines its context, limitations and subsequent history: Edward IV's commitment to justice, the immediate provocation of violence in Derbyshire, opposition to it in parliament and the passing of amendments, and the few surviving details of prosecutions under the act in Edward IV's reign.

Valerie Horsman and Brian Davison, The New Palace Yard and its Fountains: Excavations in the Palace of Westminster 1972-4, *The Antiquaries Journal*, volume 69, part 2, 1989, pp.279-297.

New Palace Yard was the scene of major court occasions from the reign of Edward III to the sixteenth century, and the buildings around it included the Law Courts and the Court of the Star Chamber. This article is the first to reconstruct this part of the Palace using the new information of the 1972-4 excavations, it includes a study of the Great Conduit, which ran with wine during coronation festivities. Photographs and plans.

Charles V. Phythian-Adams, Rituals of Personal Confrontation in Late Medieval England, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, volume 73, number 1, Spring 1991, pages 65-90.

An attempt to 'reconstruct the foreignness of the past', in this case the ideals and reality of behaviour and body-language during the process of violent confrontation in an age when Englishmen are said to have been given to extremes. Examples, 1485-1550, show that 'words' often served instead of blows and mediators frequently saved the situation.

Nigel K. Tringham, The Whitsuntide Commemoration of St William of York: A Note, *Records of Early English Drama*, volume 14, number 2, 1989, pages 10-12.

The commemoration of St William appears to have included acting scenes from his life as well as carrying his relics in procession. Newly found evidence in the accounts of the vicars choral of the Minster shows that such 'plays' continued at least until 1426, and record of payment by the chamberlain of the dean and chapter to *histriones* at Whitsun c.1477 suggests they lasted much longer.

John Watts, *De Consulatu Stiliconis*: texts and politics in the reign of Henry VI, *Journal of Medieval History*, volume 16, 1990, pages 251-66.

Maintains that the English translation of Claudian's *The Consulate of Stilicho* was dedicated to Richard, Duke of York, in the 1450s rather than at the time of the date given in the colophon (1445). York was to take upon himself the government of the realm by popular appeal and for the common good; not as king but in the King's name. Eventually York could not survive on those terms.

J. L. Watts, The Counsels of King Henry VI, c.1435-1445, *English Historical Review*, volume 419, 1991, pages 279-98.

Tries to define the 'King's Council' and 'counsel to the king' by analysing the expectations of the political elite during a period of weak rule.

Notes on Contributors

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Instructions to Contributors to the Ricardian

Contributions 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.

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