

Book Reviews

PETRUS CHRISTUS: HIS PLACE IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLEMISH PAINTING. Joel M. Upton. 1990. Pennsylvania State University Press, £40.40. ISBN 0-271-00672-2.

In an obscure corner of the new Sainsbury wing of the National Gallery is the bust-length portrait of a man in a green gown over a red doublet, a heavy gold chain round his neck, wearing a black *chaperon* with a prominent *bourrelet*. In his right hand he holds a silver collar of SS, as if about to proffer it to the viewer. The beginnings of a smile play across his face, the frank disposition of which is enhanced by the strong light which plays on it. He is shown in a room adorned with coats-of-arms which enable him to be identified as Edward Grimston, who was serving as Henry VI's ambassador to Philip the Good in 1446, when this painting was executed by the Bruges artist Petrus Christus. Though there are earlier portraits of Englishmen, this apparently independent one breaks new ground in its presentation of the subject within a realistic interior setting. Even within the context of Netherlandish painting this device is startlingly novel. In Jan van Eyck's independent portraits the sitter is always presented against a flat background, whereas Edward Grimston is shown in what Panofsky called a 'corner space', the precursor of the room with a view of portraits by Bouts and Memlinc. Furthermore, whereas Jan van Eyck mapped the contours of the face with unrivalled skill, Christus aimed more to capture the character of the individual.

Petrus Christus had the misfortune to belong to the generation after Jan van Eyck. As a result he has often been summarily treated by art historians writing general histories of Flemish art. Friedländer, for example, writes of 'a reflection of Eyckian art . . . endowing the poor achievements of Petrus Christus with prestige and glamour'. It was not until 1974 that the first monograph on Christus was published by Peter Schabeccker. This remains the fullest account of his life and the most comprehensive catalogue of his works. Joel Upton's aim is somewhat different. Concentrating on particular paintings, most notably the Washington *Nativity*, he attempts to demonstrate that Christus made a distinctive contribution to Flemish painting. By means of detailed yet clear compositional analyses he reveals Christus's mastery of perspective and the devices he used to obtain the affective involvement of the viewer. He rightly compares the coherent spatiality of the Kansas City *Madonna* with seventeenth century Dutch domestic interiors by artists such as Pieter de Hooch. One is even tempted to speculate whether seventeenth century artists were directly inspired by the example of Christus.

Upton argues convincingly that the Detroit *St. Jerome* and the Frick *Madonna* should be disassociated from Christus's *oeuvre*, and so, unlike Schabecker, he sees no reason to posit the artist's presence in Bruges prior to 1444, when he purchased his citizenship. Christus was a native of Baarle-Hertog in north Brabant, and persons bearing the same curious surname, which may denote that an earlier member of the family was a maker of devotional images, have been recorded in Breda. Upton, who has an interesting section about Christus's Dutch heritage, develops earlier observations about his connection with the shadowy Haarlem artist conventionally known as Albert van Ouwater. If anything, Upton overplays Petrus Christus's independence of thought, thereby falling into the same trap as Friedländer, who equated derivation with inferiority. Many of the great monuments of medieval art and literature are recreations of existing works. The Berlin *Last Judgement* and the Brussels *Lamentation* may not be simple derivations or synthetic compromises of Eyckian or Rogerian prototypes, but there is no mistaking the quotations from those artists, which were doubtless meant to be recognised.

In his preface Upton states that he has made a selection of paintings from Christus's *oeuvre* that seemed to reveal most clearly his pictorial value. It is a pity, though, that certain other works are not at least mentioned. The Copenhagen *St. Anthony and Donor* is compositionally remarkable for the way in which the kneeling man is enveloped in the dark mass of the saint's mantle, thereby emphasizing the latter's protective role. *The Portrait of a Young Man* in the National Gallery, with its glimpse of a landscape on the right, represents a significant advance from the Grimston portrait. Also worthy of at least a footnote is the silverpoint drawing of a young woman, which bears all the hallmarks of Christus's style, in the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum at Rotterdam. But to have included this would have involved the awkward question of the drawing's status. More serious than these omissions is the consignment to a footnote of the panels of the *Annunciation* and *Nativity*, signed and dated 1452, which were acquired by the Groeninge Museum in Bruges in 1983. Upton himself admits that they are 'complex images of considerable interest', but gives the lack as yet of a technical analysis of these panels as the reason for not discussing them. This strikes me as an all too convenient excuse for avoiding the task of fitting them into the established chronology of Christus's work and determining their relationship to the Berlin panels painted in the same year.

In the Bruges *Annunciation* the tiled floor forms a cross pattern, foreshadowing the end of the redemptive process initiated by the angelic salutation. Upton is good at identifying and commenting on such hidden symbolism. Occasionally, like many iconographers, he sounds like a preacher *manqué*, drawing meanings probably never intended by the artist out of the slimmest of evidence. A case of this is his treatment of the four men in the background of the Washington *Nativity*. These are seen not as mere shepherds but as representatives of the senses of sight and hearing. However, his identification of an allusion to Moses in Joseph's discarded pattens in the same painting is more surely grounded in the imagery of the *Biblia Pauperum*.

A final example of the fresh insights into the work of Petrus Christus to be found throughout this well-produced book is provided by the discussion of the Berlin *Portrait of a Young Lady*, whom Upton characterizes neatly as a petulant

teenage princess longing to be back at the festive party for which she is dressed. It transpires that this is probably another of Christus's English commissions, for Waagen recorded that the original frame, now lost, had an inscription stating that the sitter was 'eine Nichte des berühmten Talbots'. 'Nichte' is presumably a translation of 'neptis', which can mean either 'niece' or 'granddaughter'. Since the girl's age seems to be somewhere between twelve and seventeen, and her costume, with its distinctive truncated black *hennin*, points to a date not long before Christus's death in 1472 or 1473, it is likely that we have here the portrait of one of the two daughters of John Talbot, second earl of Shrewsbury, either Anne, who married Sir Henry Vernon of Tong and Haddon in 1466, or Margaret, who married firstly Thomas Chaworth and then Ralph Vernon. Upton makes the reasonable suggestion that the most likely occasion for this commission would have been the marriage of Margaret of York in 1468.

NICHOLAS ROGERS

THE BLACK DEATH. Philip Ziegler. 1991. Alan Sutton Publications, Stroud, £17.99.

Ziegler's account of the Black Death is now over twenty years old. We have here an uncorrected version of the original text, taking no account of books and articles published since 1969. Both the virulence of the epidemic and its medical cause have been subjected to radical review and debate since then, so that a new academic study would have to take account of a range of findings and opinions not represented here. In many ways, however, Ziegler's book is closer to the evidence than some recent studies that make greater claims to science. No book on the Black Death is without serious weaknesses, and for sheer readability Ziegler's remains easily the most accessible treatment of the subject.

This is already one of the most widely read works of medieval history. Alan Sutton's handsome new edition has the added attraction of 74 illustrations, of which ten are in colour. Few of them are directly related to the events of 1348-50. There is a black rat (p.16) — whose relevance some would now deny — some scenes of epidemic disease (pp.4, 60), funerals (pp.34, 186), a plague cemetery (p.124), deserted villages (pp.109, 134) and so on. But these embroideries on the text convey vivid images of the world to which so many millions bade farewell in 1348 and 1349.

RICHARD BRITNELL

ENGLISH SOCIETY IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES 1348-1500. Maurice Keen. 1990. Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London, £17.99.

Maurice Keen is a master of the art of writing clear, coherent and convincing syntheses of medieval history. In 1969 he penned the notably thought-provoking *Pelican History of Medieval Europe*. His 1973 study of *England in the Later Middle Ages* remains, even after almost twenty years, the best introduction to

later medieval politics, government and society. Now he has written another high quality book on *English Society in the Later Middle Ages*. While not seeking to pioneer new interpretations or indulge in scholarly nit-picking (rightly, in a survey aimed at a wide readership), Keen certainly demonstrates over and over again the depth of his knowledge and the maturity of his learning. Not only does he take on board much of the considerable bulk of recent work on English society between the Black Death and the end of the fifteenth century but also draws constructively on primary sources ranging from chronicles and statutes to poll tax returns and court rolls. Disarmingly, he declares himself 'bewildered in the world of numbers' (hence the lack of graphs or tables), as well as admitting 'there is probably too much of the anecdotal and the "history of everyday things"' in what he has written. Yet these faults (if faults they are) actually help explain why the book is so very readable.

Maurice Keen's basic thesis is both simple and compelling. In 1350, he argues, traditional wisdom had it that society consisted of three estates, functionally divided in relation to each other: the first estate, the clergy, whose business was with prayer and spiritual well-being; the second estate, the warriors, whose task it was to defend the land and its people with their arms; and the third estate, the labourers, whose toil supported the other orders. And, although always an idealized picture combining notions of divine ordination and a static, hierarchic society, it still bore *some* relation to reality in the early fourteenth century. By 1500 it did not. Vast changes occurred in the structure of society following (and partly as a result of) the arrival of the Black Death in 1348: most dramatically, endemic plague ensured long-term demographic recession and its wide-ranging consequences; the strains of the Hundred Years War had a profound impact on relations between government and governed; and the spread of literacy beyond the clerical community irrevocably blurred and complicated conventional social divisions. Much of the book, in fact, is devoted to tracing both the causes and scope of this great transformation of society.

Each estate is considered separately but, as soon becomes apparent, such a procedure poses insurmountable problems of organisation. Thus, for instance, Keen discusses plague, depopulation and labour shortage under 'The Third Estate' when, obviously, all three estates were affected; he treats the chronic violence of later medieval society under 'The Second Estate' while freely acknowledging how much more widespread it was; and, perhaps least satisfactory of all, he deals with the spread of literacy under 'The First Estate' when, as he himself emphasises, what is most significant here was the growth of *lay* literacy and the rise of the English vernacular. Nevertheless, the structure has advantages as well, notably in enabling the author to build up a nicely rounded picture of each of the three orders. Certainly, he presents a well-balanced portrait of the clerical estate, showing a healthy scepticism about contemporary strictures on the clergy while, at the same time, refusing to reject such criticisms out of hand; he finds an interestingly mixed bag of personal piety, fear and superstition in popular religion; he gives sober consideration to both mysticism and the Lollards; and, above all, he brings home just how much authority and influence clerics had over the lives of lay men and women. When discussing the 'Chivalry', he displays a notably sure touch in his treatment of the aristocratic household and lifestyle; his analysis of baronial feuding and its consequences is

characteristically penetrating; and he brings out well the importance of war and military service in France for so many English nobility and greater gentry. Nor is he weaker on the 'Commons', covering, as he does, not only life in the countryside in the context of declining rural population but also the fortunes of towns, the fluctuations of trade and the evolution of an urban culture (with particular attention to Westminster and London).

All teachers of later medieval history continually strive to impress upon their charges the need to view the past objectively and not distort what they find there in order to accommodate modern interests and prejudices. There is certainly no danger of Maurice Keen doing that! If anything, he makes too few concessions to the late twentieth-century reader: women receive surprisingly slight treatment (despite the amount written on them in recent years), aliens (such as Lombards and Hansards) figure only very peripherally, gays and lesbians not at all. English heterosexual men, in fact, dominate the book. Since women's lives were so often shaped by the status of their male connections, the author asserts, 'it seemed to me better not to treat womankind separately, but in the context of the class, standing and preoccupations into which their partnerships with their menfolk drew them'. No doubt many will disagree here, and with justification, but such criticisms should not be allowed to cloud the fact that, in most respects, this is a very fine synthesis indeed.

KEITH DOCKRAY

THE WARS OF THE ROSES. J. R. Lander. 1990. Alan Sutton Publications, Gloucester, £16.95.

Examination of an original 1965 copy of Professor Lander's book alongside this new edition reveals the great strides that have been made in presentation and illustration in the twenty-five year interval. The first edition consists of 335 pages of uniformly dense print on coarse paper with eight poor quality black and white photographic plates. The new production uses an attractive slightly glossed paper with over eighty crisp black and white photographs set in the text at relevant positions and a further eight colour plates. The text has been completely reset with good use of insets, paragraphs and different types for quotations, commentary and captions. This is altogether a very pleasing volume to handle and another tribute to the design and production skills of Alan Sutton Publishing and Geoffrey Wheeler's picture research.

Within this new presentation it might be expected that after twenty-five years there would be major revisions and additions to the text. Indeed the jacket notes promise a 'totally revised edition' and the author's preface speaks warmly of the work of 'a younger generation of scholars'. However, whilst the text has clearly been re-examined to the extent of minor corrections and the omission and addition of some references, there is very little of substance to distinguish the words of the present edition from the original. With some notable exceptions such as the late Professor Ross's *Edward IV* (1974) and H. A. Kelly's Ricardian article: *The Last Chroniclers of Croyland* (1985), almost all the references to printed sources predate 1965.

The intervening period has witnessed such a remarkable flowering of research and publications on the period, not least by Professor Lander himself, that it is at first sight surprising that this is scarcely reflected in his new edition. However perhaps the answer lies in the nature of the work. Apart from the introduction, it is essentially a collection of excerpts, mainly from chronicles and contemporary letters, with a fairly economical connecting narrative and commentary. It might be argued that the interpretation and status of the chosen source material has been largely unaffected by recent research and debate or that adequate consideration of recent interpretations would fatally disturb the successful balance and format of the original. There is also the possibility of uncomfortably duplicating or overlapping the parallel treatment by Hammond and Sutton of other documents of the period in *Richard III: The Road to Bosworth Field*.

Whatever the reason, disappointingly but perhaps wisely, the text of this edition is changed but little from the original. Nevertheless its method remains a valid and valuable alternative approach for a 'textbook' of the period and its new presentation should ensure a further twenty-five years of life and a new generation of readers.

R. C. HAIRSINE

THE BATTLE OF TOWTON. Graham Hudson. A booklet-broadside. Second edition 1991. John Smith's Brewery Ltd., Tadcaster, N. Yorkshire LS24 9SA, £2.

Medieval battlefields are, I feel, difficult to accurately interpret even with the advantage of a depth of local topographical knowledge and must inevitably be open to some conjecture. However, at least the site of the battle of Towton is beyond dispute and the casual visitor armed with the booklet under review can, with some confidence, follow the course of events on that bleak March day of 1461.

It is pleasing to see this simple guide reaching a second edition. As the subtitle indicates it takes the form of a large poster-sized sheet folded into a convenient pocket shape with the text on one side corresponding with the folded size and a large illustrated plan on the other. It is well and professionally printed in three colours on a good quality sepia paper which should last well. It comes complete with a polythene slip case which will prove useful on a wet or snowy visit to the site.

The text gives a straightforward account of the battle drawn from a variety of sources, which are unfortunately not given by the author. It is in the manner of an eight mile ramble beginning and ending at the *Crooked Billet* public house. Inevitably in a guide of this nature the course of events is over simplified, but the contemporary evidence for any medieval battle is fragmentary and slight, and myth and legend become inextricably woven with fact. It takes more space than is allowed or indeed needed in a guide of this nature to begin to unravel the various strands. An advantage is that the area at Towton remains much as it must have appeared those five long centuries ago, it has not been built on, prettified or over interpreted. Long may this remain so. Its very site is a worthy memorial to all those who died there on that fateful day.

I have no hesitation in recommending this guide to the visitor and the regrettable lack of even a short bibliography for further reading will prove less of a disadvantage to members of the Richard III Society who will be more aware of the background and sources for the battle and its aftermath than the casual visitor.

RICHARD KNOWLES

PILGRIMAGES. Richard Barber. 1991. Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge, £16.95.

Fifteen years ago I read a book with an almost identical title, about a practice medieval, Christian and West European called pilgrimage. It shows how our perception of the world has changed that the dust cover of Richard Barber's book has Hindu pilgrims bathing from the ghats at Benares. He attempts a world view over time of this phenomenon, but the title in the plural acknowledges that it can only cover a selection of the material on this vast subject. The wonder is that he touches on so much in 155 pages, seventeen of which are informative illustrations.

If the book did nothing else, it would teach us a great deal about what Muslims and Hindus actually do on pilgrimage, and give us an inkling of why they do it — surely worth knowing in this inter-faith age. But its great achievement is to place pilgrimage in the context of world religions. It is absent only from Protestant Christianity, but *Pilgrim's Progress* suggests that Protestants too are pilgrims, at least in spirit. Since pilgrimage was so much a part of medieval spirituality, this world perspective may help us to empathise with our ancestors of the Yorkist age. One or two get personal mention — Margery Kempe (inevitably), William Wey Fellow of Eton, the Italian priest Felix Fabbri, people not so different from ourselves on their 'package tour' pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

In so short a book, we hardly need to be told twice that Ise is the shrine of the Japanese Sun-Goddess, or that pilgrims returned home to heightened social prestige. These are among a few small lapses in a highly readable and enjoyable book. It carries a wealth of learning lightly, and it is a pity that the bibliography is so 'select'. Few books move so surely to a conclusion (in both senses of the word) — that the many varied pilgrims at Lourdes, Knock, Mecca, Kumbha mela and all the other shrines mentioned 'suspended their ordinary lives to seek out a spiritual goal; and in that they are truly pilgrims in a common cause.'

BARRIE WILLIAMS

ENTERPRISE AND INDIVIDUALS IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND. Edited Jennifer Kermode. 1991. Alan Sutton Publications, Stroud, £24.00.

The social history of the fifteenth century is notorious for the clashing imagery that historians have used to describe it. It was a century of growth, stability and of decline, of growing enterprise and of declining opportunity. It was a century of lawlessness in which law was set on a pedestal. Noblemen built up local power in order to count in national politics. Wealthy wool merchants handled a declining wool trade, and the golden age of medieval urban culture was an age of urban crisis. Only the careful examination of particular questions will help us to see clearly through so many seeming contradictions. The seven papers in this volume are valuable contributions to this task. They were originally prepared for the Fifteenth-Century Colloquium at Liverpool in September 1988.

Three of the papers are concerned with the countryside. Christopher Dyer defines the argument for supposing that fifteenth-century countryside was conducive to capitalist development, which he carefully defines in terms of structural change and social mobility. Colin Richmond stresses the essential contingency of estate management, and the unpredictable range of personal, legal and social circumstances that influenced what the Pastons did. Richard Smith describes how the greater participation of married peasant women in land transactions, and the increasing creation of jointures, implies an improvement in their lot. The other four papers are all primarily to do with towns and trade. Wendy Childs illustrates the importance of credit for the conduct of England's overseas trade in the 1450s. Carole Rawcliffe demonstrates why arbitration was of outstanding importance for the resolution of commercial disputes. Nigel Ramsay accounts for the growing importance of the scrivener's profession in the fifteenth century. Miri Rubin explains how the social relations implicit in some characteristic fifteenth-century institutions were negotiable rather than determinate.

These papers are not ostensibly linked by a common theme. Yet the title of the volume is well chosen. These seven studies illustrate well the opportunities for novelty in the fifteenth century and the numerous ways in which people were recreating the institutions of the society in which they lived.

RICHARD BRITNELL

MEDIEVAL BEASTS. Ann Payne. 1991. The British Library; £14.95.

Medieval Beasts is a collection of 175 illustrations, 79 in colour, 96 in sepia, drawn from ten medieval Bestiaries in the possession of the British Library. 43 animals, 24 birds, 13 reptiles and 4 fishes — most real, some fabulous — are described, as well as bees which are classed as birds. Each creature gets a short description which includes reference to its symbolic significance; there is a two-and-a-half page introduction and the briefest of reading lists. The text is by Ann Payne, a scholarly and respected member of the staff of the Department of

Manuscripts. The colour reproductions are adequate and the page lay-out clear and pleasant enough.

I am not sure for whom this book was written nor, indeed, why it was published at all. It is too expensive a book to give to a small child, who might like the pictures but for whom the text would be too difficult; it lacks the thoroughness and the critical detail which the student or scholar needs; as a coffee-table book, it would be quickly passed over. The manuscripts from which the illustrations are drawn are listed at the beginning, and by going back and forth to the index at the end, we can identify the source of each, but no provenance is given — the opportunity is missed for revealing the audience for whom the Bestiaries were written. This is a great pity for the Bestiary is a delight and a fascination, today as in the fourteenth century, and it would have been good to have had some detailed information about those for whom these manuscripts were prepared in the first place.

In making these criticisms, the author of the book should be exempted from all blame. For at least the last three generations, it has been the practice of the National Museums to produce small books on particular topics aimed at pleasing and educating the general public; I still have a fair number which I bought as a child for sixpence — three weeks' pocket-money — which delighted and informed me then, and which do so still. The British Library recently produced a quartet of winners on Medieval Craftsmen — painters, masons, embroiderers, and workers in stained glass — which are up to the highest standard of anything produced in the past and which retail at £6.95 — the 1991 equivalent of what I might have bought fifty years ago with a pre-war half-crown book-token. *Medieval Beasts* seems to me to be an attempt to break into a higher-priced market with a book of more luxurious format but with a restricted formula for the text, so that the author has had to limit her own undoubted scholarship. This is not the sort of book that the British Library should be publishing; it reads like something produced for the remainder market, not for those, young or older, who frequent museums. A selection of postcards would be better value.

Today, all our museums and galleries are under great financial pressure — pressure to cut back on anything considered not to be absolutely necessary, pressure to increase revenue from all sorts of merchandise. It is, however, bad economics to produce, presumably in haste, a book that is just not up to the British Library's own standards, and I have ventured to be so severe in the hope that a cry of warning may make those who control the Library's publishing policy think very carefully about what they are asking their excellent staff to write.

ANN SAUNDERS

THE BEDFORD HOURS. Janet Backhouse. 1990. The British Library, £9.95. ISBN 0-7123-0231X.

John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, married Anne of Burgundy in 1423 and the Bedford Hours, British Library, Additional Ms. 18850, 'one of the most splendid

illuminated books of the period', was commissioned to celebrate that marriage (it was probably a gift from the bride's brother Philip of Burgundy). The prestige value of owning such a magnificent book was considerable. Although there is no documentation concerning its actual production, the Parisian provenance of the illumination is indisputable. Bedford had become Regent of France in 1422 in the name of Henry's infant son, Henry VI. Henry V had married Princess Catherine of France in 1420, thereby cementing the Treaty of Troyes, by which the succession to the crown of France had been ceded to Henry and his heirs. Janet Backhouse gives a summary of the Anglo-Burgundian Alliance and also considers the tradition of book-collecting which had been developing in France and England since the mid-fourteenth century: the great bibliophiles Charles V and the Duke of Berry were Anne's immediate ancestors, and Bedford was the son of Mary de Bohun, whose family were perhaps the single most important patrons of illuminated liturgical books in England in the fourteenth century. After placing the Bedford Hours in its historical context, Backhouse moves towards a more detailed analysis of the manuscript's structure, in which she discusses its design, textual and iconographic contents, as well as the armorials. The most unusual element appears to be the Hours of the Passion, with its accompanying picture cycle, which is fully explained. The marginal schemes, which are unusually rich and original, comprise over a thousand circular miniatures, in addition to those accompanying the thirty-one principal textual divisions. The choice of texts and subject-matter is usefully summarised in an outline at the end of the volume. Backhouse conjectures about the placing of the armorials and opposes an earlier argument that they were additions. Particularly interesting is her discussion of the political implications underlying some of the iconography, such as the fine full-page miniature illustrating the Legend of the Fleur de Lys. The principal artist, known as the Master of the Duke of Bedford, was head of a major workshop in Paris during the first half of the fifteenth century and his oeuvre, as well as that of his assistants, was sizeable. The complex issue of a division of hands of the Bedford Hours itself is not discussed, and although reference is made to further reading for anyone wishing to pursue this question (see, in particular, the article by Spencer), further detailed study needs to be done in this area, which Backhouse readily acknowledges. Some idea of the sumptuous quality of this manuscript is provided by the elaborate decoration which occurs at the major divisions of the text, to which can be added seven full-page miniatures (and an eighth if one adds the now overpainted armorial tree on f. 15). Special attention should be drawn to the realistic portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford (Figs. 43 and 47) and the wealth of detail, both iconographic and ornamental; the borders, for instance, contain a plethora of flora and fauna exquisitely rendered. It is to this publication's merit that all of these folios are reproduced in sequence, the majority in colour. The quality of the colour reproductions is high and the black and white plates, although less sharply defined, are certainly adequate for study and general appreciation. This manuscript, of which there has been until now no full and adequate description, is therefore a fitting choice for the British Library to make available to the public at a very reasonable cost. With all the significant pages of decoration reproduced, many for the first time, in the context of a readable and informative text, this beautifully produced paperback, like the Luttrell Psalter which preceded it in the

series, comes highly recommended as both a scholarly and enjoyable account of this unique manuscript.

LYNDA DENNISON

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

Erika Vitz, *Women in the Medieval Town*, (translated by Sheila Marnie). Illustrated. 200 pages. 1990. Barrie and Jenkins, London, £14.99.

Translated from the German. Covers women's working conditions and their position under the law; their crafts and trades; their role as mothers and wives; their religious influence. Excellently illustrated, especially from German sources. Notes and bibliography.

ARTICLES

Caroline Barron, London and Parliament in the Lancastrian Period, *Parliamentary History*, volume 9, part 2, 1990, pages 343-367.

Detailed examination of all aspects of London's relationship with parliament c. 1400 to 1461-3: the procedures of election of MPs; the growth of the role of the common council as the electing force; the type of man chosen (rich aldermen and increasingly the City's lawyers); the cost of MPs and of keeping the peace incurred by Londoners (as well as the profits) when parliament sat at Westminster. The economic weight of the City was often persuasive in parliament. Tables.

C. J. Neville, The Law of Treason in the English Border Counties in the Later Middle Ages, *Law and History Review*, volume 9, number 1, Spring 1991, pages 1-30.

The problems of controlling crime in an area where the criminal could take advantage of the border to escape prosecution. The 1352 statute of treasons and the two 1414 acts (one to enforce the observance of border truces) are discussed. Assesses the importance of the wardens' courts in the second half of the century in the absence of records after 1450. Sees real progress only in the sixteenth century with the refinement of conciliar government.

Andrew Taylor, *The Myth of the Minstrel Manuscript*, *Speculum*, volume 66, 1991, pages 43-73.

Discusses manuscripts from *circa* 1130 to the sixteenth century all at one time or other linked by scholars to English minstrels, and disproves the idea that any identifiable, surviving body of material can be safely attributed to the ownership of minstrels. Rejects the stereotype of the wandering minstrel. Fifteenth-century manuscripts analysed include Lincoln's Inn Ms. 150, British Library Sloane Ms. 2593, Bodleian Library Ms. Douce 302 and Cambridge University Library Add. Ms. 5943.

Roger Virgoe, *The Earlier Knyvetts: the Rise of a Norfolk Gentry Family*, Part 1, *Norfolk Archaeology*, volume 41, part 1, 1990, pages 1-14.

The Knyvett families of Buckenham Castle and Ashwellthorpe. Part 1 covers the period from the early thirteenth century, via a successful lawyer and a marriage to a Clifton of Buckenham Castle, to just after 1500. Examines their litigation over lands in the fifteenth century and the effect of politics on their success in the courts. Corrected pedigrees. Also deals with the Essex Knyvetts.

Notes on Contributors

Richard Britnell teaches history at Durham University. He studies the social and economic history of the Middle Ages, and has written a book about Colchester between 1300 and 1525.

Lynda Dennison. After completing her doctorate in 1988 on the manuscripts produced for the Bohun family, has taught history of art at St. Mary's School, Wantage, continuing research in her spare time.

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

Jean M. Gidman, BA., has been a member of the society for over twenty years and until recently was a librarian at Edge Hill College of Higher Education.

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

Peter Hammond. Co-editor of *British Library Harleian Ms. 433, Coronation of Richard III, Road to Bosworth Field*. Editor of *Walpole, Historic Doubts*, and author of *The Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury*.

Richard Knowles, author and co-author of a number of publications on medieval armour and effigies, he is also co-editor of *Church Monuments*, the Journal of the Church Monuments Society.

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

Ann Saunders, Ph.D., F.S.A., historian; author of *Regent's Park, The Art and Architecture of London* and other books. Hon. Editor to the Costume Society and the London Topographical Society.

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

Isolde Wigram. Honorary Secretary of the Richard III Society from 1956 to 1968.

Barrie Williams. Head of History and Assistant Chaplain, St. Hilda's School, Whitby. Author of *Bishop's Subscription Book, Franciscan Revival and Work of Archbishop John Williams*. Working on Welsh Clergy 1558-1642.

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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