

Book Reviews

SEEABLE SIGNS: THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS 1350-1544. Ann Eljenholm Nichols. 1994. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, £49.50. ISBN 0-85115-342-9

This major study has a number of linked ambitions, most of which it realises extremely well. One is to provide a detailed account of the tradition in East Anglian churches, from the mid fifteenth to the mid sixteenth century, of ornamenting the font with a series of carvings illustrating the sacraments (fonts so decorated survive in far greater concentrations in this region than elsewhere). Many problems attended the achievement even of this modest aim: in particular, the difficulties of dating many of them (Figure 3 and pp. 304-6); more importantly, the problem of identifying their features, given that so many have been badly damaged by Reformation hostility and later ignorance (pp. 81-9), and consequently often misidentified by earlier writers (pp. 7, 8, n. 11, 56-7, 72); given, too, that artists were themselves not above introducing error into their works (eg p. 261 n. 6). Professor Nichols's achievement, though, is anything but modest. As a comprehensive account of the fonts (see especially the *Font Gazetteer*, pp. 325-53, and the lavish black-and-white reproductions), the book could hardly be bettered: for a single example, note how Professor Nichols identifies the fragment at Oaksey as illustrating extreme unction rather than matrimony because of the disposition of the clasped hands (p. 290).

A second aim of the work is to relate these carvings to other representations of the sacraments in art: in stained glass windows, principally in the West Country; in English manuscript illuminations, particularly two copies of the *De Sacramentis* of the Carmelite Thomas Netter, part of his enormous *Doctrinale*; and in a selection of European artifacts (stained glass, tapestries, manuscripts, etc.). The presentation of this material allows Professor Nichols to argue for the development of a distinctive English iconography of the seven sacraments by comparison with European treatments of the subject, and to further distinguish East Anglian from West Country figures because of the latter's clearer dependence on Continental models (pp. 2, 59). Another major section of her work is thus given over to mapping the iconography of the sacraments in English and European art (especially pp. 185-302). Her work has greatly advanced our knowledge of the subject, not least because of the way in which she carefully distinguishes the many

similar elements of the sacraments and their iconographic representations (sometimes creating new names for them in the process). She has steered a careful course through the contemporary literature on the sacraments, and argues convincingly about the influence of that literature on the carvings. She also situates the carvings relative to treatments of other traditional subjects: extreme unction, for example, alongside representations of the death of the Virgin (p. 300).

Professor Nichols argues, in particular, that East Anglian treatments are to be distinguished from Continental because of the formers' greater concentration on the essentials of the sacrament (the dipping of a baby in water for baptism, for example): their concentration, that is, on the theology of the sacrament, and on the realisation of the actual 'moment of liturgical action' (p.161) when the sacramental rite becomes an expression of divine grace. By contrast, Continental representations are often too interested in the ritual circumstance of the sacrament or the sheer drama of the moment (pp. 163, 167, 179) to provide a clear understanding of its meaning. As art, the Continental figures may be superior; as theology, they are decidedly inferior.

This opposition is not, of course, as absolute as Professor Nichols sometimes seems to want it to be. Even the English representations seem on occasion as interested to record 'contemporary East Anglian practice' (p. 243, n. 5, cf pp. 121, 299) or to show 'precisely what would be seen' by a spectator at the different rites (pp. 252, 265) as to present their theological meanings; for that matter, the decision to illustrate the sacrament by the moment when it produces its effect leads inevitably to a concentration on the human figures which, if we followed Professor Nichols's way of thinking, we should have to find at least in a state of tension with the offered theological meaning. Contrast, for example, the baby struggling in its godmother's arms, on the font at Great Glemham (Plate 39 and p. 205: admittedly, viewed by Professor Nichols as eccentric), with the sacraments as represented in vulneral art, that is, pictures where the blood of the crucified Christ flows in streams from his wounds to representations of the sacraments, as a way of urging the latter's dependence on the former for their life-giving force (plates 8-12). The latter figures are more truly theological, as the sources used by Professor Nichols understood that term, in the sense that they inhabit an extra-temporal, extra-spatial dimension where the totality of the faith can be apprehended in a single image. The same can also be true of stained-glass windows, which can also be apprehended as a totality in the way the carvings on the several faces of a font never can. By contrast, the baptism with the struggling baby is theological in a sense that modern readers may well feel more at home with – that is, the total human context provides the source of religious signification – and is arguably more incarnational. But so to argue is to find the clear line between the essentials and the accidentals of a sacrament blurring.

Professor Nichols does so argue, in pursuit of a third, yet more ambitious, goal. She argues that representations of the sacraments in English art were produced as a response to Wycliffite denials of the sacraments. More particularly, she links the surviving material in East Anglia with the clear evidence, on the one hand, of intense Wycliffite activity in the region, before and during the period when the fonts were being commissioned ('in some of the affected villages...Lollardy must have been the majority belief', p. 108); and with equally striking evidence, on the other, of Carmelite hostility to the heretics there and elsewhere (a hostility figured most notably in the production, though not in East Anglia, of an illuminated version of Netter's *De Sacramentis*, which may well have been known there, p. 123). Similar argumentation obtains for the West Country, another hotbed of Lollard activity, where not fonts but windows were chosen to carry the orthodox message. The reduction of the sacraments to their essential elements in stone and glass is therefore a consequence not of limited space or limited artistic ability but of authorial or patronal intention. One of the more interesting manifestations of this process is occasional recourse to English to enable readers to identify the scenes (pp. 91-2).

I fully accept the general thrust of this argument, but I also hope I am not alone in feeling an unavoidable irony in it. Such work, we might suppose, is *prima facie* more appropriate for heretics, who have been or are to be brought back to orthodox beliefs, and who had better not be confused by too much extraneous religious detail, than for the faithful, for whom, by contrast, not simply the sacraments but the whole sacramental régime must be defended against attack. Hence, in several of the fonts, more than just the central moment of the sacrament is being represented; hence, more pertinently, Netter's *Doctrinale* includes not just a section on the sacraments but also one on the sacramentals. One would not need to be a radical Lollard to find ironic this visual restriction of the simple faithful to the same simple message that they had been given since the time of Archbishop Pecham's Constitutions: not least since the 'typical inclusion of traditional material on the sacraments in miscellanies designed for lay use reflects an ability [on the part of the lay readers] to shoulder some of the responsibility for doctrinal learning' (p. 153).

In any case, the evidence of a specific causal link between the production of the fonts in East Anglia and the activities of the Wycliffites and their arch opponents the Carmelites is, as Professor Nichols admits (p. 101), tantalisingly incomplete. There is no certainty that the picture will ever be completed: even were such a project possible, it would require a work many times the size of the present enormous volume. We should need to know, for instance, why other centres of Wycliffite activity like the Midlands did not have recourse either to glass or to fonts as a way of defending their religious positions; or why, since the Carmelites

were also active in London, London churches do not provide comparable evidence. As it is, the link between Netter and the East Anglian fonts reduces to one visual emblem (an angel hovering above the head of the penitent, p. 123 and plate 22) and, perhaps more importantly, an ordering of the sacraments that a number of the fonts share with Netter's *De Sacramentis* (p. 126). Given how much Professor Nichols has given us, it is churlish to ask for more, but there *is* a project (or several projects) here, which will probably take several scholarly lifetimes to bring to completion (witness the many footnotes which identify areas where further study 'is badly needed').

A few minor quibbles remain. (i) The use of black-and-white for photographic reproductions was probably an economic necessity, but it does not always make for easy reading: plate 18, for example, is too small for the details it contains to be easily recognised; the stream of red blood spoken of in plate 11 (p. 17, n. 31) simply does not show up in reproduction. (ii) The secondary literature in the bibliography is not always easy to match up with the abbreviations used in the footnotes; the reference to Reames (p. 292 n. 13) does not seem to be elucidated by the bibliography; on p. 277 a superscript 7 is needed in the body of the text for the footnote below. (iii) There are numerous, mostly minor, errors of transcription: quotations from the seven-sacrament illustration in British Library MS Add. 37049 (plate 20), which I have always seen as a religious version of snakes-and-ladders, should read not 'fylyss ... & (false)', but 'fyles... in', and 'men that wil no[t] [r]epent ther syn', not 'men that syn' (p. 53); that from Drury's catechism, for 'esily', should read 'besily' (p. 145); that from Mirk on p. 242 should read 'Goddess [not Goodes] body'; the text on p. 15 makes no sense as presented ('Lavabi nos in sanguine tuo'). Occasionally Professor Nichols follows printed sources into what looks like error: 'coninzations', a word unrecorded by the OED, from the Register of Bishop Mayhew, should surely read 'coniurations' (p. 103 n. 44); (iv) Translations are not always accurate: on p. 94 n. 11, for 'three heresies... neither', read 'the third heresy... although'; on p. 265 n. 14, for 'in three [other areas]', 'a third time'. (v) Professor Nichols once ventures a neologism which, though intelligible ('liceity', pp. 282 n. 20, 283), is distracting.

Nevertheless, this remains a book worth devoting much more time to than a reviewer is able to: and a book to accompany the reader on his or her next church-crawl in East Anglia and the West Country. I look forward to spending more time in its company.

ROGER ELLIS

THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE: THE ORIGINS OF NORTHERN CONSCIOUSNESS IN ENGLAND. Helen M. Jewell. 1994. Manchester University Press, £35 (hb), £14.99 (pb) ISBN 0-7190-3803-0(hb), ISBN 0-7190-3804-9 (pb)

Jeremy Potter famously, and I now suspect with tongue firmly in cheek, declared in his *Good King Richard?* (1983) that in the late-fifteenth century England was, then as now, two nations, north and south. Several historians, the present reviewer included, have explored the significance of regional animosities as they were expressed in the context of political conflicts five centuries ago. These have been given deeper and wider significance first in Frank Musgrove's *The North of England: a History* (1990) and now more ambitiously and with greater scholarship in the book under review.

Dr. Jewell traces the development of this divide, rooted as she sees it in prehistory, from Anglo-Saxon settlement to Industrial Revolution. As her subtitle reveals her intention is not merely to demonstrate that a north-south divide existed, but to show that a northern consciousness, which all know has flourished since the late-eighteenth century, is, as she puts it, 'literally as old as the hills' (p. 6). Having first judiciously discussed the thorny problem of where precisely this divide lay at any time in the past (but neatly side-stepping the fact that in the middle ages the authorities of the University of Oxford took it to lie on the banks of the river Nene in Northamptonshire), she offers in two chapters a narrative of north-south relations from Bede to Wyvill. Four thematic chapters follow on economic, social, religious and cultural matters. The range and scope is impressive: here is a thorough synthesis of recent research and publications touching on the north and its relationship with the south, encompassing topics such as standards of living, housing, distribution of wealth, geographic and social mobility, dialect, as well as the standard issues of Anglo-Scottish relations, the borders, the Pilgrimage of Grace, and, of course, Richard III. Even so there are some surprising gaps. There is little discussion of the question of law and order away from the borders, which is puzzling since one of the supposed characteristics of northerners in general is that they were lawless. And it is unfortunate that she has missed Jonathan Hughes' work on the particular character of northern piety in the later middle ages which, although not all agree with it, offers another string to her bow.

Her thesis being that the divided nation and the consciousness of it lies steeped in our past, the work is heavily slanted to the medieval, anglo-saxon as well as fifteenth-century. It is also unashamedly, and enjoyably, partisan in its approach. Her introduction takes on the efforts of the combined forces of the Thatcher government and the Murdoch press to deny that there was such a thing as a north-south divide in the 1980s. Jewell will have none of it: the north has generally been a victim of the remorseless imperialism of the south. Northerners from time to time

might have temporarily asserted themselves against this trend, particularly in the late-fifteenth century, but it was always a lost cause. The chapter taking the story from 1485 to c.1780 is thus revealingly entitled: 'The political and administrative southern offensive'.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Richard III's northernness is stressed, though carefully not exaggerated. Richard III, who is only implicitly one of the heroes of her story, comes as the culmination of one of those occasional checks against the remorseless growth of southern dominance. His reign was the last moment when 'northern political domination had any chance of asserting itself' (p. 5). Indeed, she supposes, that when Henry Tudor defeated him at Bosworth 'a dangerous northern independence was averted' (p. 57). This is wrong. The significance of Richard III as king is that he vigorously reasserted central, royal control over the north which he commanded and knew, in the west march by retaining the wardenship in hand, in the palatinate of Durham by holding the temporalities for eighteen months, and over Yorkshire by means of his council in the north. If anything averted impending northern independence, itself a questionable interpretation, it was Richard's accession to the throne, not his overthrow two years later. Indeed, were such an interpretation to be put on the battle, it would be that the northern earls (Northumberland and Westmorland) helped Henry Tudor defeat the king in the mistaken belief that they would thereby gain a greater freedom of action in the north for themselves.

There also appears to one who comes from Somerset, but has lived in County Durham for quarter of a century, to be a conceptual problem or two with the thesis itself. First there is the assumption that there is, and has been since almost the beginning of time, a divide. The geographical, racial, economic, political and historical differences that exist and have for long existed within the kingdom of England, especially between the more northerly and more southerly parts are undeniable. But a 'divide' is sharper and deeper than differences and not everyone would agree that England is, or has been for many centuries, divided in the sense implied in this book. Margaret Thatcher was probably correct to dispute the notion in the 1980s, as anyone who is familiar with North Yorkshire, certain parts of Durham City, or even Tony Blair's constituency of Sedgefield will testify. There are pockets of the 'south' throughout the modern 'north'. Dr Jewell seems to assume a degree of homogeneity in the northern counties that never existed. Moreover she does not give due weight to the wealth of evidence that shows the ready and constant communication between all parts of the kingdom, in all walks of life, even in the late-fifteenth century. Men and women, rich and poor, were constantly on the road between Newcastle and London, Carlisle and Oxford, in trade, administering estates, on affairs of state, on pilgrimage; and also preying on them as highwaymen, in which even Geordies and Cockneys were partners in

crime. And is it not significant that as a matter of course generations of young men from Westmorland or Yorkshire travelled (and many returned to practice) to the universities and inns of court for clerical and legal training? If there was such a strong northern consciousness why wasn't a northern university successfully established until the nineteenth century?

Furthermore, it is not possible, as Dr Jewell has to concede, to demonstrate from the evidence available the existence of a 'northern' consciousness. By far the greater part of the evidence of consciousness is of southern consciousness of being superior to the north. The north is largely a cultural construct of those who perceive, with relief, that they live far away from it. Only rarely, as in the Wakefield second shepherd's play do we see anything close to a reciprocal feeling, and that is only a joke about a southern accent. What we have is a powerful myth of the north, which has long literary antecedents – biblical (*Jeremiah*, 1:14), historical (William of Malmesbury, Higden, Crowland, Vergil *et al.*) and balladic (Robin Hood, Adam Bell, Chevy Chase). It is here in this 'literary locale', as Colin Richmond has styled it (*Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 1993), that the north existed as both a frightening and an attractive other place. (A suitable locale, of course, for Richard III.) The book very effectively reveals how this construct came into existence, but it doesn't trace the origins of northern consciousness.

Despite the reservations, perhaps because of the disagreements expressed above, this is a book to be welcomed. One admires the broad sweep, envies the control of such a wide range of historical writings, and appreciates the endeavour to establish a general interpretative overview. Above all it renews debate about how we perceive the provincial histories of England. The reader needs to stand back and ask is it really so? Is it really the case that England, then or now was or is divided into a north and a south? Does the north, or the south for that matter, possess such homogeneity? Does this not tell us more about English perceptions of the south and the north than about the actualities? And are there not more important divides with which we should be concerned, then and now, such as the divide between rich and poor?

A.J. POLLARD

THE LIVERPOOL IVORIES: LATE ANTIQUE AND MEDIEVAL IVORY AND BONE CARVING IN LIVERPOOL MUSEUM AND THE WALKER ART GALLERY. Magaret Gibson. 1994. HMSO, London, £45.

ISBN 0-11-290533-1

The untimely death of Margaret Gibson in August 1994 robbed us not only of a distinguished scholar in the field of medieval intellectual history but also of a writer of several valuable art-historical studies. She was particularly attracted by ivories, which present peculiar problems of attribution and iconographic interpretation. Her skills in teasing out the meaning of a work are well displayed in this sumptuously produced catalogue of the late antique and medieval ivory and bone carvings in the Liverpool Museum and the Walker Art Gallery. Each of the forty-seven pieces is illustrated in colour, and black and white photographs are provided of comparative material.

The core of the collection at Liverpool was built up by an early nineteenth-century Hungarian connoisseur, Gabor Fejérváry of Eperies. It came to England when it passed to his nephew Ferenc Pulszky, who had gone into exile after the 1848-49 revolt. Pulszky offered the ivories to the British Museum, which did not have the means to acquire them. So they came to be part of the private museum which the antiquary Joseph Mayer donated to Liverpool in 1867. Ten of the ivories were destroyed by bombing in May 1941, but the holdings have since been enlarged by acquisitions from Philip Nelson, Upholland College and elsewhere.

The production of ivories in late antique and medieval Europe was episodic. Gibson provides useful notes about the availability at different periods of the various materials employed: elephant ivory, whalebone, walrus ivory (used for an exquisite Winchester school Nativity excavated near Sandwich), and common bone. One curiosity which she notes is that whereas elephant ivory was readily available in Paris and other parts of northern Europe in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the material does not seem to have been used at that time in Spain, Italy and southern France. The portability of ivories has led on occasion to some remarkable provenances: three of those acquired by Fejérváry have English associations, two (nos 25 and 27) having been carved in this country and the third (no. 35), though most probably the work of a French carver, early belonged to one 'Dominus Willelmus Lidiat'. An early fifteenth-century Italian comb, with scenes of a preacher and the Fountain of Youth, was found in 1791 in the ruins of the Benedictine priory of Ickleton, Cambs. Perhaps the most outstanding items in the collection are the three panels (nos 11-13) from an antependium or throne made for the Archbishop of Magdeburg c. 980, which testify to the originality of early Ottonian art. Two of the panels, which at one time were part of a reliquary made

for Archbishop Albrecht von Brandenburg's treasury at Halle c. 1520, were acquired by Mayer from the Possenti collection at Fabriano. The third, Christ and the Adulteress, had been purchased by Fejérváry from the Viennese dealer Böhm in 1844. This occasions a delightful footnote on the text which Christ wrote on the ground, in which Gibson displays her familiarity with medieval exegesis. Other panels from the sequence are to be found in Darmstadt, the British Museum, the Louvre, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, while a further four were re-used for a book-cover now in Berlin. Although only about five inches high, these are major pieces of sculpture. Margaret Gibson's catalogue enables us to appreciate ivories as much more than minor arts.

NICHOLAS ROGERS

MEDIEVAL CAMBRIDGE: ESSAYS ON THE PRE-REFORMATION UNIVERSITY. Edited by Patrick Zutshi. 1993. Boydell Press and Cambridge University Library, £35.

ISBN 0-85115-344-5

Of the two medieval English universities, Cambridge has been by far the less well-studied. Even the history of the university now in progress is on a smaller scale than its Oxford equivalent, and the medieval volume was disappointingly narrow in its perspective. Under the general editorship of Patrick Zutshi a new series, *The History of the University of Cambridge: Texts and Studies*, has been set up to try and redress the balance, and the present volume is the second to appear. The essays are aimed at the specialist, and several of the contributors assume prior knowledge of the medieval university and its terminology, and of Cambridge topography. Malcolm Underwood's authoritative discussion of the St John's College land in west Cambridge cries out for a proper map. Translating the medieval street names into their modern equivalents is not enough, at least for non-local readers.

The volume is not, therefore, always easy reading. But it does prove its editor's contention that the Cambridge evidence is far richer than is often thought, and has been under-used in the past. It is startling to discover, for instance, that, in spite of generations of college historians, the medieval statutes of Pembroke College (edited here by Jayne Ringrose) have never been published before. Even the dedications of two of the colleges were uncertain, until the persuasive identifications made here by Professor Christopher Brooke in his discussion of the ways in which the choice of patron saints reflected wider trends in medieval devotion. The importance of finding the right friends in *this* world is a sub-text of Malcolm Underwood's study of the acquisition of land by St John's College, and

emerges strongly from Catherine Hall's account of the foundation of Corpus Christi, which decisively debunks some very long-standing myths and brings out how much weight the college's founders attached to securing the backing of Henry, first duke of Lancaster. His role of college patron was inherited by his unpopular son-in-law, John of Gaunt, which helps to explain why it was Corpus which was attacked by the rebels in 1381.

The great and the good also feature in Alan Cobban's essay on medieval commoners: men who were not college fellows but who lived in college as paying guests. The practice was later to lead colleges to augment their income still further by housing undergraduates, but until the end of the middle ages such paying residents were mostly clerics returning for further study, along with a small but growing number of aristocratic scholars whose status made the usual student lifestyle inappropriate. The best known example is Henry IV's half brother, Henry Beaufort, who lived for a time at Peterhouse, but there were numerous others, including at least two illegitimate sons of John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon and later Duke of Exeter, who were at Cambridge in the early 1440s. The 'Sir Henry Huntingdon' at King's Hall around the same time was surely a third illegitimate son rather than (as Cobban argues) John's legitimate son and heir, the husband of Richard III's sister Anne.

Unlike their aristocratic lodgers, college fellows were often hard up, and the colleges offered them the facility of modest, interest-free loans, against the security of goods of a higher value (often, of course, books). Goods and money were kept locked in a chest, and Roger Lovatt discusses the records of two such loan chests, which not only reveal borrowing patterns (with fellows temporarily redeeming books needed for their work, for instance) but also cast some light on the different scholarly interests of the colleges concerned.

Only one contributor addresses the university itself. James Brundage explores the links between the university's canon lawyers and the ecclesiastical courts which were held in the town. He suggests that it might even have been the existence of such courts which drew disaffected Oxford scholars to Cambridge in the first place – although this begs the question of why Cambridge rather than any other town with similar courts. But certainly once the university was up and running, its canon lawyers can be found acting in the ecclesiastical courts – which, in modern terms, were providing not only work experience but also consultancy fees to beef up academic earnings. Like hardship funds and the desirability of wealthy patrons it is a reminder that in academia some things never change.

ROSEMARY HORROX

FAITH AND FIRE: POPULAR AND UNPOPULAR RELIGION 1350-1600.

Margaret Aston. 1993. Hambledon Press, London and Rio Grande, £37.50.

ISBN 1-85285-073-6

Margaret Aston has long been established as an authority on late medieval and early modern popular religion. Her previous collection of papers, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (Hambledon Press, London, 1984), contained a number of fundamental contributions to the subject, and the present publication includes papers of equal importance. The chapters comprising *Faith and Fire* were originally published as separate articles between 1974 and 1990, except for chapter 3, 'Bishops and Heresy: the Defence of the Faith', here published for the first time. The emphasis throughout, which provides a unifying focus for the book, is placed upon the interaction of received Church doctrine and the devotional practices of the laity.

This theme is discussed in the keynote chapter, 'Popular Religious Movements in the Middle Ages'. The religious initiatives of the laity are examined in the context of 'the interactions of two worlds: the literate clerical and the illiterate secular' (p. 2). Aston concentrates on the tensions that arose when the Church was presented with lay religious developments, such as the adoption of new saints into the popular consciousness and lay attempts to emulate the poverty of Christ. Aston sees the fifteenth century as 'very much an age of the laity' (p. 25), when 'the renewal of the Church, the call to evangelical regeneration that is the essence of the Christian faith, was expressed ... from below' (p. 25). Formal Church teaching at the parochial level was often of a highly traditional nature, a feature which has helped to create a historiographical tradition which regards the medieval lay piety as a formulaic set of mechanistic rituals devoid of meaning and rooted in primitive superstition. Although published originally in 1981, this article remains an important contribution to the resurgence of interest in the late medieval Church, suggesting that the commitment of the laity was actively responsible for ensuring that in many ways the Church did keep abreast, at the local level, of the requirements of its parishioners. Aston does not subscribe to a simplistic division of religious belief into 'popular' and 'official'.

The complexity of the relationship between clergy and laity with regard to heretical movements, and the significance of lay heresy for the Church in the fifteenth century is examined in the new piece included in the collection, 'Bishops and Heresy'. Aston here focuses on the career of Bishop Reginald Pecock of Chichester. Pecock's extensive knowledge of heretical literature, acquired during his efforts to provide alternative orthodox teaching in order to pre-empt the heretical writers, ultimately led to clerical suspicion of his own orthodoxy and his forced abjuration before his peers in 1457. This underlines the problems faced by

the clerical authorities, particularly in an age when lay religious education was advancing rapidly, and when the more extreme forms of punishment available to the ecclesiastical courts risked alienating the secular classes with whom the Church was obliged to co-operate if judicial procedures were to retain their effectiveness. The connections of numbers of the nobility and gentry with Lollardy in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries highlighted these difficulties, and meant that the prelacy had to keep abreast of developments in lay religious sensibilities. This represents a rather different approach to the problem of the position of the Church within late medieval society from recent studies which stress its success in administrative, rather than devotional, terms.

In this light, the significance of early incidents of iconoclasm and anticlericalism, and the influence of Wycliffe's works, may be accorded greater prominence than revisionist historians might allow. Two chapters are devoted to the question of iconoclasm in the early sixteenth century. Chapter eight, 'Iconoclasm at Rickmansworth, 1522: Troubles of Churchwardens', provides a detailed reconstruction of one incident of early iconoclasm, within a wider context, more fully explored in chapter ten 'Iconoclasm in England: Official and Clandestine'. These chapters represent an expansion of ideas previously aired in Aston's *England's Iconoclasts*, I (Oxford, 1988), and again explore the relationship between lay religious initiatives and the attitudes of clerical and secular authorities. Stress is laid upon the potential impact of the radical ideas of a small number of persons even if the majority of English parishioners had no desire for, or interest in, religious reformation; 'overnight image-breaking by the few could alter the course of reform and affect the future beliefs of the many' (p. 288). Indeed this is the basis upon which much of Aston's work rests: the influence of literary material far outweighed the actual number of persons able to access it directly, since it required relatively few individuals to initiate radical religious initiatives to set in train momentous changes in the popular religious worldview.

Faith and Fire is a highly readable collection of articles, which amply demonstrates Aston's sensitive handling of the fundamental questions regarding popular and 'official' religious belief and practice. Aston's concentration on the contribution of the laity towards religious change, within a complex lay-clerical relationship, emphasises the point that religious change cannot be understood apart from the shared worldview of an entire society. We should, perhaps, direct our attention away from the political plotting of 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' parties at Court, and seek a deeper understanding of the cultural parameters within which the people of fifteenth and sixteenth century England constructed their spiritual world.

D. HICKMAN

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

Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts. A Guide to Technical Terms*. 128 pages. Illustrated. 1994. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, in association with the British Library, London, £9.95. ISBN 0-7123-0340-5.

Set out as a dictionary from 'Abbreviation' to 'Zoomorphic Initial', explaining the terms for such items as liturgical texts, scribes' tools and the parts of a book. Attractively produced and well illustrated, partly with little known pictures from items in the Ludwig Collection, now at the Paul Getty Museum.

Linda L. Brownrigg, editor, *Making the Medieval Book: Techniques of Production*. 1995. 167 black and white and 8 colour illustrations. Anderson-Lovelace, 13040 Alta Tierra Rd., Los Altos Hills, CA 94022; The Red Gull Press, Flat 3, 10 Adamson Rd., London NW3 3HR, £65 (plus £5 p&p from UK publisher)

ISBN 0-9626372-2-X

A collection of thirteen essays ranging over studies of individual manuscripts from the eighth to the fifteenth century from all over Europe. Subjects include illuminations, binding, assembly marks, penwork, medieval painting treatises and the pigments used, as well as the modern photography of medieval manuscripts. Preface by A.I. Doyle. The book is also a masterpiece of book production in its own right.

Adolfo Salvatore Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*. 1933. Illustrated. 688 pages. Slipcase. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. ISBN 0-87099-644-4.

Covers the history of the collection; the fabric, weaving and yarns; how tapestries were used in the middle ages; the character and stylistic development of tapestry design in France and the Southern Netherlands 1375-1525; and the history of tapestry weaving during this period. Extensively illustrated in black and white and colour with the tapestries themselves as well as related material. The book is inevitably weighted to post 1500 tapestries.

Eric Inglis (commentary), *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy. Codex Vindobonensis 1857, Vienna, Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek*. 1995. Facsimile in 380 pages of full colour; 80 pages commentary. Manuscripts in Miniature, Harvey Miller Publishers, London, £48. ISBN 1-87520-187-7

Written by Nicolas Spierinc, a favourite scribe of the Burgundian court, and illustrated by several artists including the Master of Mary of Burgundy who did the famous window scenes, one incorporating what may be a portrait of Mary. Possibly commissioned by Margaret of York for her daughter-in-law, the Duchess Mary, in the 1470s.

James H. Marrow, with a contribution by François Avril, *The Hours of Simon de Varie*. 1994. Monograph with facsimile, with other illustrations in black and white and full colour. 249 pages. Slipcase. Thomas and Hudson, London, (published in association with the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague), £65. ISBN 0-500-09242-7

Contributions by several authors: J.H. Marrow describing the Hours and F. Avril the patron. The Hours is now in three volumes and in two museums. The Hours contains four miniatures by Jean Fouquet showing the patron praying before the Virgin, and his arms. Made early in the second half of the fifteenth century for Simon de Varie, a member of a merchant family in the service of Charles VII and Louis XI, ennobled in 1448.

D.D. Martin, *Fifteenth-Century Carthusian Reform. The World of Nicholas Kempf*. Studies in the History of Christian Thought, volume 49. 1992. xvi and 416 pages. Brill, Leiden. DFL 189, US\$ 108.25 (cloth). ISBN 90-04-09636-1

Scholarly and very readable study of Kempf (c. 1415-1497), who taught at Vienna University and became head of several Carthusian houses in Austria and Slovenia, and his contemplative, monastic idea of reform, which to adherents of scholasticism, humanism and the enlightenment seemed escapist, backward looking and 'womanish'. Appendices on his genuine and attributed work, including selected texts.

Carol M. Meale, editor, *Readings in Medieval English Romance*. 1994. 238 pages. D.S. Brewer, Cambridge, an imprint of Boydell and Brewer Ltd., Woodbridge, £29.50. ISBN 0-85991-406-6

A collection of essays including studies on *Sir Isumbras*, *Sir Degrevant*, the *Cursor Mundi*, *Havelok*, romance and hagiography, the *Tale of Gamelyn*, Sir Thomas Malory and the Pastons, and the audiences of romances.

H.W. van Os, with E. Honnée, H. Nieuwdorp and B. Ridderbos, translated from the Dutch by M. Hoyle. *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*. 192 pages. 1994. Merrell Holberton, London, in association with the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. £30. ISBN 1-85894-011-7.

Full catalogue with colour illustration of each exhibit of the small but important exhibition held at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, from 26 November 1994 to 26 February

1995. One of its exhibits was the portable altar of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, of which the four sections had been brought together from Baltimore and Antwerp.

J.W. Steyaert *et al.*, *Late Gothic Sculpture. The Burgundian Netherlands*. 352 pages. Illustrated. 1994. Ludion Press, Ghent, and Abrams, New York. £45 (cloth). ISBN 0-8109-3577-5

Full catalogue of the exhibition of late medieval, mainly religious sculpture held at the Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, 18 September to 27 November 1994; circa 250 illustrations of which 90 in colour. Bibliography.

Thomas Sullivan, OSB, *Benedictine Monks at the University of Paris, A.D. 1229-1500. A Biographical Register*, Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, volume 4. 1995. xii and 458 pages. Brill, Leiden, DFL 190, US\$ 108. 75 (cloth). ISBN 90-04-10099-7

Information about 671 Benedictine and Cluniac monks, particularly those who gained a doctorate in theology and canon law. Primary sources used include university, faculty and collegiate records, papal registers, abbatial lists, minutes of general chapters and church councils and cartularies.

Henry Summerson, *Medieval Carlisle. The City and the Borders from the Late Eleventh to the Mid-Sixteenth Century*. Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society Extra Series volume 25 (1993). 2 volumes. 817 pages. Figures, maps and plates. £40 to members of CWAAS. Contact Ian Caruana, 10, Peter St., Carlisle CA3 8QP. ISBN 1-873124-18-X

A scholarly and exhaustive study of a city intended to safeguard the Scots border. In seven chapters, of which the last two cover 1391-1561. Topics include the government of the city, its relationship with Cumberland, its population and economic life, the church and religious life, the social structure and civic life. Acknowledges Richard III's popularity in the north and accords his rule due space. Extensive bibliography and index.

Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling. The Complete Works*. Translated by Ted Alkins. 1994. Illustrated. 431 pages. Slipcase. Fons Mercator Paribas, Antwerp, and Ludion Press, Ghent, £95. ISBN 90-6154-311-2

Catalogue of all works and a full discussion of the artist's life and works in relation to his contemporaries, and as a portraitist; his epigraphy, design, technique and style, and the meaning of the image. Full bibliographical and scholarly apparatus. Magnificently illustrated in black and white and colour.

ARTICLES

Janet Backhouse, 'Sir John Donne's Flemish Manuscripts', *Medieval Codicology, Iconography, Literature, and Translation. Studies for Keith Val Sinclair*, edited by P.R. Monks and D.D.R. Owen. Brill, Leiden, 1994, pages 48-53.

Brief biographical note of Donne, a member of the court of Edward IV who often stayed on the continent, and factual description of his three mss: BL, Mss Royal 15 D iv, French translation of Curtius' *Life of Alexander*; Royal 16 F v, *Livre de Sydrach* and *La Somme du Roy*, and Royal 20 B ii, French lives of Sts John the Evangelist, Edward the Confessor and Mary Magdalene, with a text on the Assumption of Mary. Four black and white illustrations.

P.W. Hammond and Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'Did Edward IV strike coins in Burgundy?: a rose noble in stone in Maastricht', *The British Numismatic Journal*, volume 63, 1994, pages 129-32.

Shows that this coin was not chosen as a stone house ornament because Edward struck coins overseas or because adherents of the White Rose stayed in the town in the early years of the sixteenth century, but because the rose noble, both genuine and imitation, was highly valued in the Low Countries for centuries and was one of the many decorative objects carved in stone and placed in the frontage of a house to distinguish it from others. Illustrated.

John Marshall, "'Fortune in worldys worschyppe": the satirising of the Suffolks in *Wisdom*', *Medieval English Theatre*, volume 14, 1992, pages 37-66.

Very detailed search for possible allusions, innuendo and political satire directed against the unpopular William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, and his wife, in the morality play *Wisdom* (East Anglia, c. 1460).

Ben R. McRee, 'Charity and gild solidarity in late medieval England', *Journal of British Studies*, volume 33, 1993, pages 195-225.

Questions whether religious gilds failed to live up to their stated charitable objectives as badly as has been claimed. Suggests that the gilds did not only wish to relieve individuals but also to foster solidarity and mutual obligation among members by their charitable status. Analysis of accounts and byelaws shows that it was the richer urban gilds which offered charity while charging higher entry fees and demanding a high degree of good behaviour from their members; they were also likely to survive longest. Analysis of the disabilities which provoked charitable grants; charity was only given to the deserving. No gild was rich enough to support prolonged giving. Suggests there was great fear of discredit if members were indigent. Holy Trinity Gild, Lynn, and the Gild of St George, Norwich, provide detailed fifteenth-century data.

A.J. Pollard, 'Dominic Mancini's narrative of the events of 1483', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, volume 38, 1994, pages 152-63.

Attempts to make sense of Mancini's inconsistencies and his use of conflicting sources of information. Concludes that the text 'is a story', a moral story, literary and dramatic. The origin of this version of events must be 'the memories of the ousted servants of Edward V' including John Argentine. The same memories inspired the *post*-1485 reporters.

J.F. Wade, 'The overseas trade of Newcastle upon Tyne in the late middle ages', *Northern History*, volume 30, 1994, pages 31-48.

Based on the data contained in the fourteen customs accounts which survive for 1454-1509. Discusses exports and imports and places of trade, among which the Low Countries predominated. The careers of some of the shippers and merchants are sketched

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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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