

3. Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard III*, ed., C.A.J. Armstrong, 2nd ed., Oxford 1969, p. 69.
4. Mancini, p. 63.
5. A.J. Pollard, Dominic Mancini's Narrative of the Events of 1483, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, vol. 38 (1994), p. 159.
6. Mancini, p. 69.
7. Mancini, p. 71.
8. R. Davies, ed., *York Records*, London 1843, pp. 148-150.
9. Mancini, p. 79.
10. *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, vol. 2, *The History of King Richard III*, ed., R.S. Sylvester, New Haven and London 1963, pp. 11, 51.

Book Reviews

MEDIEVAL CODICOLOGY, ICONOGRAPHY, LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION. Studies for Keith Val Sinclair. Edited Peter Rolfe Monks and D.D.R. Owen, 1994. E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York and Cologne, Nlg. 220.00; U.S. \$125.75. ISBN 90-04-09958-1

This volume has thirty-three contributions; these reflect the wide range of K.V. Sinclair's interests as defined by the 125 items in the prefatory bibliography of his writings. Contributions are grouped under headings such as Codicology, 'Scribal', Manuscript Illustrations and Illustrators, Literary History and Individual Authors, Translations, and Philology. Particularly suitable as offerings for the author of a major catalogue of medieval manuscripts (*Descriptive Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in Australia*, 1969), and for someone who has done so much for the study of medieval devotional texts in French, are J.P. Gumbert's handlist of manuscripts containing medieval French in Leiden University Library, Judith Oliver's discussion of French devotional texts in Beguine Psalters, and Clive Sneddon's account of a Middle French translation of the Pauline Epistles.

Janet Backhouse describes Sir John Donne's Flemish manuscripts, giving an account of works now in the British Library (Royal 15 D vi, Royal 16 F v, and Royal 20 B ii). All bear Donne's arms. The most splendid is the *Res Gestae Alexandri Magni* of Quintus Curtius Rufus, in the French edition of Vasco de Lucena done for Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Backhouse inclines to the view that this was indeed a manuscript given to Donne by the Duke's wife, Margaret of York, and her step-daughter, Mary, Duchess of Burgundy, when he was on a diplomatic mission for Edward IV to Flanders after Charles' death in 1477.

Other contributions on fifteenth-century manuscripts include those of Roger Wieck, 'Inventive efficiency from the Master of the Ghent Privileges, or a little bit of Hell goes a long way', where details of a miniature from Degulleville's *Pèlerinage de l'âme* illustrating the 'punishment of the impatient and riotous' were re-used in two books of hours, a missal and a St Augustine text. Claude Schaefer studies the activities of the Jean Colombe *atelier* after 1470, the idea of workshop production being used to explain the enormous variation in quality in works associated with a painter called on to complete the Limbourgs' *Très Riches Heures* in the 1480s. Peter Monks questions some attributions to the Master of Jean Rolin, the miniaturist who worked with the descendants of the Bedford Master in mid-fifteenth century Paris and whose work is reckoned to have been the formative influence on the celebrated and prolific Maître François later in the century.

For earlier periods, Lilian Randall suggests that the three self-portraits of William de Brailes in thirteenth-century Oxford manuscripts were efforts to ensure his own salvation by placing his image in pictures signifying redemption. Margaret Manion attributes the picture cycles for the Hours of the Trinity in manuscripts made for the French royal family from c. 1325 to c. 1385 to Dominican advisers. Pierre Cockshaw examines the calendar illustrations and text of the Belleville Breviary of c. 1323-1326 and some eleven related later versions – the celebrated explanation of the images in the Belleville Breviary is printed in full.

Each contribution has a full range of footnotes. There is a full index, essential for a collection of disparate articles, and an index of cited manuscripts. The editors are to be congratulated. The advice of Cassiodorus, discussed and printed in full in the contribution of Wolfgang Milde, that errors in texts allow Satan to intervene and inflict wounds, has been taken to heart.

ROWAN WATSON

BASTARD FEUDALISM. Michael Hicks. 1995. Longman, London, £34 (hbk), £11.99 (pbk).

ISBN 0-582-06091-5 (hbk); 0-582-06092-3 (pbk).

Since the publication of works by Bean and Bellamy in 1989, bastard feudalism has been the subject of rigorous analysis. Now no longer seen as a meaningful social phenomenon during the late medieval period only, the concept has extended its domain back into the twelfth century and forward into the seventeenth. Hicks builds on this analysis and seeks the answers to some of the questions it has raised. Defining bastard feudalism as 'the set of relationships with their social inferiors that provided the English aristocracy with the manpower they required' (p. 1), he reviews the period from 1150 to 1650, the 'middle phase in a thousand years of aristocratic domination of politics' (p. 218). For him, the indentured retainer was not, *pace* McFarlane, at the centre of the bastard feudal retinue. Rather retaining by indenture was merely a phase – extending from the reign of Edward I to that of Edward IV – in the history of a method of social organisation that must be more broadly conceived. Elaborating the insights of Bean and James, he forcefully argues that a lord's household and tenants were the 'nucleus and bulk ... of every connection' (p. 103), capable, in normal circumstances, of satisfying his administrative and military needs. By contrast those retained to serve outside the household, whom he describes as 'extraordinary retainers', were peripheral to a lord's main concerns, forming what might be described as the unstable outer orbit of an affinity. They were recruited to extend a lord's authority, 'beyond the bounds of his demesne' and 'to tap manpower beyond that normally available to him' (p. 59). Less securely bound to a lord than the members of his household, they were subject to the competitive retaining so long seen as one of the evils of bastard feudalism. Hicks, however, is not alone in contending that the instability inherent in such competition has been overemphasised. Since, in his view, the majority of those retained were recruited through households and, as such, had 'a stable and binding relationship with their lord, which ... was often practically incompatible with contacts with any other master' (p. 103), only a small part of any retinue was open to potentially conflicting loyalties. Indeed, he speculates that the growing preference of lords for exclusive relationships was a factor in the decline of extraordinary retaining, which, outside the north of England, had almost disappeared before its abolition by statute in 1468. This stress on the growing stability of bastard feudal ties is reflected in the author's discussion of the extent to which bastard feudalism contributed to local disorder. In his most effective and persuasive chapter, he argues that complaints of disorder are not indicative of an increasing problem but occurred when 'law and order was improving and expectations of order were rising among the very class guilty of bastard feudal abuses' (p. 123); that legislative enactments against corruption may

mark 'a gradual progression towards less partial administration of justice' (p. 124) rather than the opposite; and that lords may have been prompted to retain lawyers not by a desire more effectively to subvert the legal system but by the 'need to appear just' (p. 154). He is also concerned to show that lordship, and the bastard feudal connections to which it gave rise, was 'a natural element in society' (p. 174). Here he is responding to Coss, for whom bastard feudalism marks the damaging intrusion of private lordship into the royal courts as lords subverted expanding royal administration to their own ends. He argues that Coss and other critics of bastard feudalism are too ready to associate the crown with the impartial rule of law and to believe 'that noble rule and the command of others are both inherently wrong' (p. 219), despite the fact that there is no evidence to suggest the crown was any less partial or prone to the abuse of power than lords. So positive a view of bastard feudalism raises the question of why it declined. The author shows how, as the sixteenth century progressed, social and political changes weakened its hold. On the one hand, the disappearance of overmighty subjects and the dispersal of the monastic estates resulted in a flattening of the feudal pyramid and a consequent erosion of noble lordship: on the other, the expansion of royal government and the development of increasingly direct ties between crown and gentry meant that the nobility 'lost their roles as power-brokers and mediators with the crown' (p. 205). The result was what Hicks has termed the 'nationalisation' of bastard feudalism as the crown came to monopolise all the military benefits of the aristocracy's control of men. But even here he cautions against pushing this decline too far. While, by 1650, the military and legal dimensions of bastard feudalism were not what they had once been, for the aristocracy it long remained a source of political and electoral influence and, as such, survived into the eighteenth century.

There is much to admire in this book and its robust conclusions are bound to lead to further useful debate. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the author occasionally subjugates the interests of clarity to the demands of his informal style, and that too many poorly-expressed passages have escaped the editing process. The last sentence on page 70 defies understanding, and few readers will care to read more than once the sentence that begins the second paragraph on page 44. It would, however, be wrong to end this review on a negative note. Hicks has produced a thoughtful work that will be indispensable both to undergraduates looking for a stimulating introduction to the subject and to scholars seeking a new point of departure. In reviewing so long a period he exposes continuities and discontinuities hidden from those historians who have focused their attention on the bastard feudalism of the late-medieval period. And while the question with which he concludes his penultimate chapter – were the ways the great Hanoverian nobility dominated the localities so very different from their late-medieval or Tudor

predecessors? – must still be answered in the affirmative, he has shown that it is worth asking.

S.J. PAYLING

THE McFARLANE LEGACY. STUDIES IN LATE MEDIEVAL POLITICS AND SOCIETY. Edited by R.H. Britnell and A.J. Pollard. The Fifteenth Century Series No. 1. 1995. Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., Stroud, £40. ISBN 0-7509-0626X

Collections of conference papers have become the preferred method of communication in fifteenth-century studies. I hope the new 'series' format will do something to reduce the bibliographical clumsiness this has generated, and make it easier to keep track. This is the record of the 1993 Durham Conference, with a commission to take stock of the study of fifteenth-century England in the context of the ideas of K.B. McFarlane (died 1966), universally regarded as the founding-father of what has become a very flourishing field of studies.

As always some of the contributions seem to fit fairly loosely to the commissioning formula. Indeed, it is likely that these very contributions will be of most interest to empirically-minded *Ricardian* readers. Simon Walker writes about 'political saints', examining the circumstances in which the cults of Simon de Montfort, Thomas of Lancaster, Archbishop Scrope, and Henry VI either foundered or flourished. Anthony Tuck looks at Henry IV's search for international legitimacy, most successfully with Rupert, king of the Romans, himself the occupant of a disputed throne, and with the king of Denmark; neither seems to have had qualms about Henry's usurpation, but both would have preferred a French alliance to an English one, a nice reminder of England's place in the European scene. Isabel Harvey explores interest in politics among the common people and the impact of their involvement. That they were involved is reasonably uncontroversial, but Harvey provides some interesting case-studies. She talks of the 'emergence' of popular involvement in this period; I am prepared to believe this, but would have welcomed some definition of the supposed vanished age of innocence. Linda Clark examines magnate affinities in parliaments between 1386 and 1421. This is, of course, among the first fruits of the massive accumulation of information in the new volumes of the *History of Parliament* for those years, in which she had a major part. She demonstrates, as McFarlane suspected, that peers did not swamp the Commons with sheer numbers of followers, but influenced proceedings by seeding in talented men who knew how to advance their lord's

interests. Simon Payling, in a piece which takes off from a major preoccupation of McFarlane's, examines the evolution of marriage contracts among the landed classes from the Thirteenth Century to the 1536 Statute of Uses. This is by no means an easy read, but it may claim to be the most learned contribution to the book and is indispensable for anybody trying to understand one of the central pre-occupations of the governing class; for that reason I suspect that it would have earned McFarlane's accolade. All of these essays are invigorating, tackling subjects of real importance. All of them are really concerned to 'tell it as it was', asking pertinent questions but not engaged in self-consciously reaching down into the deeper 'essence' of fifteenth-century society. Most of them take off from some preoccupation of McFarlane's, but leave it at that; they are not concerned to measure their own contribution against some supposed McFarlane doctrine. They treat McFarlane as a distinguished predecessor; and that is how it should be.

The other essays are more concerned to 'place' their subjects, to work towards some sort of characterisation of the English governmental system. Gerald Harriss expounds his vision of an England becoming a stronger, better organised, political entity in spite of, or perhaps in a sense because of, the weakness of the monarchy, with the increasing involvement of the gentry in Parliament and local government. Inevitably one of the other contributors castigates this approach as reeking of 'Whiggery', but that handy term does not in itself dispose of Harriss's careful argument. The Whiggish Victorians, after all, sought to explain what was distinctive about England. They may have confused too readily distinctiveness with superiority, they may have assumed too easily that the evolution towards political liberty in English society was somehow inevitable. But the endeavour itself was reasonable, indeed necessary. There was, after all, something important to be explained. To look at the Fifteenth Century in terms of that evolution is a valid approach; even though there would be obvious dangers if it were to become the only approach.

Anthony Gross presents a very wide-ranging paper. In part he wishes to establish that there was a weakness in late-medieval English monarchy; that usurpation undermined the standing of the crown, that there was a serious problem in raising adequate royal revenue; in short, that it needed exceptional talent to be a successful king, rather than, as an overquoted remark of McFarlane's implies, that it needed exceptional lack of talent to fail. Gross writes perceptively of the dilemma of monarchy; that to remedy the shortage of revenue involved undermining the political consensus which was equally necessary for a healthy regime. Monarchical weakness needed bolstering by public relations; the invocation of myth, 'imperial' authority, papal support, ceremony, even alchemy, grasped at as a possible cure for Henry VI's financial as well as for his medical problems. Finally Gross pleads for more attention to literary sources in our

assessment of political attitudes. Again, we can only say 'amen!'

The 'McFarlane Legacy' is tackled most directly by Christine Carpenter. She looks at McFarlane in the context of the historical profession of his day, and highlights the attack on the Stubbsian school of constitutional history which he delivered as a paper to the undergraduate 'Stubbs Society' in Oxford in 1938. She cites him as hoping for the eventual emergence of a new synthesis; and laments the failure of such a synthesis to materialise due, she argues, to an exaggeration of one aspect of the McFarlane programme, the concentration on patronage and 'connection' at the expense of men's ideas, 'mentalities'. That seems not so very different to what Harriss and Gross have been suggesting in their different ways. Carpenter's particular twist is to argue the centrality of legal thinking to fifteenth-century society; and therefore to propose that 'law and society' is the best tool to break the log-jam.

As the editors themselves suggest, the search for a new synthesis may well be a will-o-the-wisp. The fundamental point is surely the many-sidedness of human societies, and the variety of individual reactions within those societies. Historical investigation is bound to proceed by qualifying previous generalisation, thereby creating an increasingly complex picture. Equally relevant is the difficulty of correctly interpreting historical records. A fundamental characteristic of McFarlane seems to be passed over in this book; his sheer insistence on the highest professional standards, that perfectionism which inhibited publication on his own part, that contempt for the meretricious and the eye-catching which spared few, if any, of his fellow practitioners unless it were Namier. My own memory of McFarlane is of a series of lectures for graduates devoted to explaining in detail why A.B. Steel's *The Receipt of the Exchequer, 1377-1485* (1954) was vitiated by Steel's misunderstanding of the technicalities of the Exchequer rolls. I fled to the marginally less dangerous pastures of Eltonian Tudor England.

None of this excuses us from the duty of trying to make intelligible what we study. But it does suggest that a juxtaposition of studies in depth rather than the pursuit of some grand unifying theory is all we can realistically aim for. I do not share Carpenter's pessimism about the state of the subject. The study of fifteenth-century England has been transformed over the last thirty years; the result is complexity, certainly, profundity, even, but not incoherence. Carpenter's own massive study of Warwickshire, *Locality and Polity*, (1992) is one of the outstanding examples. Many of the apparent differences of interpretation (such as those between Gross and Harriss) seem to me a matter of 'both-and', rather than 'either-or', complementary rather than contradictory. It is surely unjust to McFarlane to picture him as the would-be leader of a movement towards a new synthesis. Indeed, as Karl Leyser noted in his excellent obituary (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 62, 1977, pp. 485-506) 'he was prone to oppose *idées*

reques and to establish his own insights by way of antithesis'. Leyser invoked, too, the 'cold anger' which could be directed at arrogant pretentiousness. I suspect he would have found the cult of personality which has grown up around him profoundly distasteful. Fifteenth-century historians need to show a proper confidence in their achievement and throw off that nervous glance over the shoulder, that impulse to check on what 'the master' thought or would have thought; and just get on with the job, as so many of them are doing with great success.

C.S.L. DAVIES

ST ALBANS WILLS, 1471 - 1500. Edited by Susan Flood. Hertfordshire Record Publications, volume 9. Hertfordshire Record Society, 1993. £19.20 including postage (overseas £23), from Hon. Treasurer, Hertfordshire Record Society, 14 Westbury Close, Hitchin, Hertfordshire S45 2NE ISBN 0-9510728-8-9

This is a crisply edited volume, in which some 300 testaments and wills are calendared from the second earliest surviving testamentary register of the court of the archdeacon of St Albans (now Hertfordshire Record Office, 2AR). The editor's introduction is short but clear; she explains the principles determining what is included and excluded from each testament. The opening invocation is omitted, as are usually the testator's statements about the disposition of his soul and of the residue of his goods, as well as clauses about the signing and sealing of the testament. It would have been helpful if the editor had pointed out that part of the earliest surviving testamentary register of the archdeacon's court has already been calendared, in *Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, edited by William Brigg, volumes i-iii (1895-9), though that is only as far as f. 63.

Every reader of a collection of testaments will have his or her own set of interests. The ability to cater for these is greatly helped in this volume by the very full indexes of persons, places and subjects. In my own reading I noted: a lengthy barber's testament (no. 1); bequest of a brooch for the statue of Our Lady of the Pew at Westminster (no. 13); bequest of a house for the sacristan of St Alban's abbey (no. 25); request for a brass plate engraved with the name of the testator's wife, to be placed on the cross where she is buried in a churchyard (no. 45); bequest of 1/2lb. of saffron from the crocuses in the testator's garden (no. 54); the making (renewing ?) of churchyard burial crosses (no. 135); details of probate costs (no. 148); bequests notwithstanding the making of deeds of gift of goods (nos. 172, 250); bequest of books of 'portutur' to an apprentice, and of books of medicine and surgery (no. 217);

and a bequest in 1494 for the maintenance of a light to 'blessed King Henry', i.e. Henry VI (no. 229; mis-indexed as Henry VII). Looking for any clue to the unnamed late fifteenth-century St Albans schoolmaster who is today celebrated as one of England's earliest printers, I found only John Marchall, schoolmaster in 1497 and 1499 – too late to have been the printer.

A list of quibbles, none very serious, would include the spelling 'Wolney' rather than 'Wolvey' (the latter is shown to be correct in no. 247, where Thomas W., buried in St Michael's church, is the grandson of the freemason Thomas Wolvey, died 1428, and also buried there: see J.H. Harvey's *English Medieval Architects: A Biographical Dictionary down to 1550*, revised edition, pp. 345-46, where the history of this family is set out, with references that include the present testament. In Harvey's *Dictionary*, 'grandfather' is the reading for 'father' in the calendar's opening sentence; since 'grandfather' seems the correct reading, it is disconcerting that the *Dictionary* also gives a different date of probate). 'William Juniore' (no. 267, last sentence) must be a mistake for 'William Blakeney junior'. There are several erroneous or misleading entries in the Glossary (pp. 164-74) – e.g. feoffees, notary public, official and prior; the entry 'legate' in this made me wonder what Latin word the editor had found in no. 28 (4th line from end), which led to the word 'lawyer' being used in her text and 'legate' in the index, for John Bramynghaungre who was certainly not a legate in her sense of the word, whether or not he was a lawyer.

These are only quibbles, however. And my only serious complaint is the possibly unfair one, that the editor has not calendered *all* the testaments in the register: she has excluded those that are not of residents of St Albans. Who will now make amends for this hard-done-by minority?

NIGEL RAMSAY

PLEASURES AND PASTIMES IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND. Compton Reeves. 1995. Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., Stroud, £19.99 ISBN 0-7509-0089-X

'We are inclined to think of history as the study of politics ...' writes Compton Reeves, '... but if we want to fully understand our ancestors we must know what made them smile and laugh and relax, just as surely as what supported their family economics or drew them into conflict.' Accordingly, he has produced a book which details in a very accessible and engaging manner exactly what made medieval men and women 'tick' by studying their pleasures and pastimes.

The medieval world is powerfully evoked by a great deal of detail given across a wide range of historical evidence. It is essential to make the pleasures of the past

accessible and immediate, and to this end the whole design of the book is seductive – from the wonderful brilliant red cover with its central panel showing a contemporary illustration of ‘blind man’s buff’ and lively border of May day dancing, to the eleven colour plates and numerous black and white illustrations drawn from some excellent archival sources, all very carefully referenced. There is a helpful list of secondary sources, and a bibliography and index.

The pastimes themselves are extensive – literature, art, architecture, music, dancing, fashion, crafts, games, drama, heraldry, sport, hunting, pets, and gardening, to name just a selection. The publication grew out of a talk given to the American branch of the Richard III Society in 1989, *Delights of Life in Fifteenth Century England*. This is a more evocative title than the published title, and perhaps reflects better our own satisfaction at finding how much we have in common with our fourteenth and fifteenth-century counterparts – we also love beautiful objects, get obsessed with games, love our pets and derive joy from our gardens and so on.

However, to the twentieth-century reader, living in a predominantly secular society, the centrality of religion in the lives of all, from the poorest to the wealthiest, and its effect on attitudes towards pastimes and pleasure, will be the one most striking difference between the medieval and the modern age revealed by this book. Essentially the leisure pursuits described are all those that are enjoyed today, but a strand of guilt runs through the enjoyment as leisure pursuits were often seen as a distraction from religion. Quite a number of illustrations in the book show pleasures coupled with images of devils looking on. In addition, as the book shows, religious observance and personal piety were also seen as central leisure pursuits in themselves.

This tension between pleasures and religious duty seems most clearly illustrated in the case of artists and craftsmen. People were preoccupied by a worry that the works of art that they admired and loved so much would also be seen as materialistic and even idolatrous. Craftsmen and artists were therefore rarely recognised in their own right, but instead were seen as mere agents for talents reflecting the glory of God. Consequently they rarely wrote about their work – leaving a fundamental absence of evidence that is frustrating to the historian. At the end of a twentieth-century dominated by media ‘hype’, this is an interesting contrast.

The book is full of surprising and pleasing details. The advent of spectacles is discussed in the chapter on literature. Musicians, it is noted, were thought of as craftsmen – Henry V’s minstrels were paid, accordingly, twice the salary of an archer and the same as a master surgeon. ‘Carols’ and ‘carolling’ were a popular form of secular entertainment involving simple outdoor singing and dancing. A love of luxurious dress and beautiful clothing was a central and enduring source of

pleasure to both men and women, and one that various attempts at discipline, in the shape of sumptuary statutes, could not diminish. Games, especially those with a gambling element, were increasingly popular. Chess, 'a game of strategy and war that reflected the world of real politics' had the same 'highbrow' image then as now, and was included in the education of young women and men of good birth and social status.

The raising of the *Mary Rose*, it is noted, has revealed a great deal of evidence about the types of bows and arrows used for the fashionable sport of archery. Cock-fighting and stoning chickens were seen as mere children's games equal to the innocence of marbles or hide-and-seek. Gardening was a mixture of utility and ornamental pleasure. Keeping pets from the exotic to the humble was popular – a delightful and very accurate account of the timeless character of cats ('[he] falleth on his owne feet whanne he falleth out of a highe place...') from Bartholomew de Glanville in 1240 is given as a particularly charming example.

All in all medieval men and women come alive from the pages of this book. What the book does not do is set out to analyse the concept of leisure. Something more could undoubtedly be said about the fact that the most noteworthy of the pastimes and pleasures were inextricably linked to wealth and social status. However, perhaps such an analysis is not fitting to the celebratory nature of this book. Recreation is therapeutic, as the preface points out, and reading this book is certainly a delightful antidote to melancholy.

URSULA CARLYLE

ST KATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA. The late Middle English Prose Legend in Southwell Minster MS 7. Edited by Saara Nevanlinna and Irma Taavitsainen. 1993. D.S. Brewer, Cambridge, and the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, Helsinki, £29.50. ISBN 0-85991-391-0

Richard of Gloucester, both as duke and king and like many of his contemporaries, highly venerated St Katherine of Alexandria, the saint who was a virgin and a martyr as well as a doctor of the church, and probably never existed. Her life story makes fascinating reading and has been popular ever since it was created in the Greek language in the eighth century.

Born the grand-daughter of Constantine – the first Christian Emperor of Rome and the son of the supposedly British St Helen – Katherine was given the best teachers and quickly became more learned than any of them. Succeeding her father, King Costus, at an early age she wished to dedicate herself to her studies

and avoided marriage by demanding, and describing, the perfect husband – so perfect, in fact, that her ‘requirements’ only fitted Christ himself. She was converted to christianity and found worthy to be affianced to Christ by the Virgin Mary herself – a scene made famous by Italian and Flemish artists. Not long after, the Emperor Maxentius ordered his subjects to sacrifice to his pagan gods; Katherine rebuked him with such eloquence that the Emperor summoned fifty learned men to argue with her. She defeated them in the ensuing debate and converted them all. In a more crude attempt to force her into compliance the Emperor showed her an horrific contraption of four spiked wheels by which she would be lacerated. An angel shattered the wheels – another event immortalised by many artists – and Katherine was eventually martyred by beheading. Before she died Christ promised that anyone calling on her in distress would be heard.

The text in the manuscript now owned by the Southwell Minster Library and edited in the present book was one of versions of the legend composed in England in the early fifteenth century which were revised, amalgamated and interpolated. The Southwell text is much longer than, for example, the one in the Latin *Legenda Aurea*, which only contains the martyrdom and the events leading up to it. The editors explain that vernacular lives of saints, because of the long tradition on which they could build, are remarkably ‘polished’ and this is confirmed by the text printed here; witness, for example, St Katherine’s description of her ideal husband:

For he that schall be my lord must be of so notable blod that all kyngis must worschip hym. And therwyth so greate a lord that I schall never dar thynke that I made hym a kyng. And so ryche that he passyth all odyr in ryches. And so full of beaute that angelys have ioye to behold hym. And so pur of his modre beyng a virgyn. And so meke and benyngne that he can gladly foryeve all offencis don to hym. Now have I discryvyd hym that I desyr to my lord and husbond. Goth seche hym and yf ye may fynd suche oone, then we wyll be his wyfe wyth all our hert, yf he wyll vouchesafe. And fynally, but yf ye gete us suche oon, we schall never take non. And take this for a full answer. (Thorn, yogh and the usage of u and v modernised, LVF).

The editors of the life of St Katherine from the Southwell manuscript, which was written *circa* 1500, during ‘the transition period from Middle English to Early Modern English’, acknowledge their great debt to the work of the late Auvo Kurvinen. They start with a brief but comprehensive ‘Outline of the Tradition’ of the legend, mentioning such authors as Bokenham and Capgrave, which is followed by a summary of the story as it appears in the fifteenth-century English versions, and a discussion of the narrative technique of the Southwell version and its relation to other hagiographical work. An attempt is made to identify all the sources of the text; its dialect is studied and the indications it contains of the linguistic changes that were taking place at the time; its didactic and entertainment

value is considered. The full contents of the manuscript and its physical appearance are given; unfortunately no 'interesting' owners have come to light. The text itself covers nearly thirty pages and is followed by explanatory notes, which give historical, literary and linguistic information (only here some editorial or printing errors occur). There is a 'Selective Glossary', a full bibliography and, for specialists, an 'Index of Words and Forms with their Frequencies'. The only thing that could be said to be lacking is an index to the introduction. To Ricardians the book offers an attractive, readable text, which is very close to the one that William Caxton used for his *Golden Legend* in 1484.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

Notes on Contributors

John Ashdown-Hill. Currently researching his medieval Dorset ancestors. Head of Languages at a Suffolk school, and responsible for liturgical music at the Catholic Church, Brantham, Suffolk.

Ursula Carlyle is Assistant Archivist at the Mercers' Company.

C.S.L. Davies is fellow of Wadham College, Oxford. He is working on aspects of the background to Bosworth..

Keith Dockray. Author of *Richard III: A Reader in History* (1988) and recent articles on fifteenth-century England. Currently a freelance lecturer and writer in Bristol.

Simon Payling now works for the History of Parliament Trust, formerly a junior research fellow and British Academy postdoctoral research fellow at Balliol College, Oxford, and Southampton University.

Nigel Ramsay. A curator in the Department of Manuscripts, the British Library, with the task of recataloguing the Cotton Manuscripts. Joint editor of *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products* (1991).

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

Rowan Watson is Head of Special Collections, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum.

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

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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Contributions for the March 1996 Ricardian must reach Miss Anne Sutton, 17 Enfield Cloisters, Fanshaw Street, London N1 6LD, by 31 December. Articles should be sent well in advance. Further advice on presentation may be obtained from the editor.

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