

Book Reviews:

THE PARISH IN ENGLISH LIFE 1400-1600. Edited by Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs and Beat A. Kümin. 1997. Manchester University Press, £45. ISBN 0-7190-4953-9

Recent years have seen a remarkable revival in studies of English parish life among medievalists and early modernists alike. This current crop of essays builds on the ground so usefully pioneered by the contributors to S.J. Wright's *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion 1350-1750*, (1988). *The Parish in English Life*, cannot be said to supersede this earlier collection, and represents a more uneven body of articles. Nevertheless, there is much of interest to historians here, and there are several outstanding essays that will doubtless be cited by scholars for many years to come. Many of the essays adopt an administrative and quantitative focus, with varying results. Several of the essays are concerned with investigating the nature of the surviving materials used by historians to document parochial life, highlighting the limitations as well as the potential riches that they offer scholars. Of particular interest here are two thought-provoking articles by John Schofield and Andrew Foster. John Schofield's article surveys the range of archaeological and antiquarian evidence for the character of London's medieval parish churches. This is a fascinating essay, which provides an authoritative overview of the physical development and embellishment of the City's parish churches and makes accessible to historians much specialist archaeological evidence. Andrew Foster provides a series of shrewd general observations about the use of early modern churchwardens' accounts as a source. Particularly helpful are his statistics on the survival of accounts from 1558-1660, mapped out according to geographical location. This article should act as a warning against the large-scale and uncontextualized use of accounts, given the over-representation of wealthier, urban parishes and ecclesiastically-controlled livings among surviving accounts. Foster's work also highlights the difficulty in comparing accounts on a purely statistical basis given the variations displayed by local officials in recording expenditure even within the same parish over time. Such observations should not

lead historians to throw up their hands in despair, but they leave the reader rather more sceptical when faced with several other essays in this volume, which rely heavily on classifying types of parochial expenditure and comparing parishes far removed chronologically and/or geographically. A more subtle approach is employed by Eamon Duffy, in a characteristically brilliant analysis of the building and funding of rood screens in East Anglia, which should be required reading for anyone interested in the means and motives behind church building and beautification. This article is accompanied by a fascinating series of illustrations and its wide-ranging and evocative treatment succeeds more than any other of the essays in the volume in truly conveying the parish 'in English life'.

Not surprisingly, the impact of the Reformation on parish life provides the theme for a number of the articles in the collection. In work stemming out of their association with the Records of Early English Drama, Alexandra F. Johnston and Sally-Beth MacLean examine the evidence for the survival of 'mimetic activities' in the Thames/Severn river valleys in the period after the Reformation. In this useful survey, the authors find considerable variation in the survival of festivities such as church ales, hocktide, and the performance of plays, variations which they link to factors such as the zeal for conformity displayed by individual bishops, proximity to urban centres such as London or Bristol, or the presence of particular gentry families, such as the Dormers, who retained Catholic sympathies while still involving themselves in the affairs of their local parish. Historians interested in drama and parish ritual will find much of interest in this essay, but strangely, the authors never explain the rationale behind the geographical area they choose to study (which includes the metropolitan parish of St Botolph Aldgate as well the tiny parish of Mathon, Worcestershire). By contrast, Caroline Litzenberger provides a detailed study of a single parish, St Michael's Gloucester, which charts the efficiency of its parochial establishment during the many religious changes of the mid-Tudor period and is a model of its kind in the use of statistical evidence. Several articles dealing with the Reformation period, however, find their authors struggling with a fairly slim evidential base, while two further contributors on London appear less than confident in the handling of material and would have benefited from greater efforts to refer to the work of other scholars working directly in the field (such as Susan Brigden) and the more sophisticated approach to source materials routinely employed by other contributors to this volume, such as Duffy.

Most of the remaining articles in the volume provide a series of case-studies examining particular facets of parochial societies. Work ranges from Margaret Clark's intelligently written piece on religion and society in Tudor Cumbria, to Katherine French on parochial fund-raising in late medieval Somerset to Judy Ann Ford on the assimilation of foreigners in Sandwich. There is no article in volume

comparable to David Palliser's thoughtful introductory essay in *Parish, Church and People*, but Beat Kümin's article on the English parish in European perspective is a valuable introduction to the topic, which is examined from a largely administrative angle. One oddity of the volume, given its theme of English parish life, is the quirky index, which excludes references to individual parishes and people (other than historians), although nearly half a page is given over to listing individual saints. A mixed bag, then, but with some treasures inside it.

J.F. MERRITT

LIFE, DEATH AND ART: THE MEDIEVAL STAINED GLASS OF FAIRFORD CHURCH: A Multimedia Exploration. Edited by Sarah Brown and Lindsay MacDonald. Sutton Publishing, Stroud. Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education, £40.

ISBN 0-7509-1523-4

It is a measure of the importance of the glass at Fairford in Gloucestershire that it has been the subject of two monographs within the space of thirteen years. The first was Hilary Wayment's catalogue, published by the Society of Antiquaries in 1984, the second this collection of essays. The two works were written for different audiences: Wayment provides an analytical catalogue, to the standard required by the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*, whereas *Life, Death and Art* is intended for the general public. It is as much the authors' perceptions of their readers as their own abilities which make this an uneven volume. Sarah Brown of the RCHM is exemplary in her clear yet thoughtful survey of the glass and its iconography, and of the glaziers and their techniques. Her task is assisted by an excellent set of colour photographs of all the windows. She explains how the programme of the Life of Christ is ordered to reflect the liturgical function of the building. Old Testament types with a Marian significance figure in the first window of the Lady Chapel, which is dominated at the east end by a figure of the Apocalyptic Virgin. The equivalent focus at the east end of the Corpus Christi chapel on the south side is the Transfigured Christ, an image which is frequently used in this period in a eucharistic context. The most unusual aspect of the Fairford iconography is the novel form of psychomachia in the nave clerestory, a series of full-length 'persecutors of the church' on the north side, with attendant devils in the tracery, balanced by saints and angels on the south. Keith Barley, who was in charge of the 1988-97 programme of restoration, provides a lucid account of the repair and conservation of the glass over the centuries.

But some contributions are less rewarding. Colin Platt's introductory essay is

oddly unsatisfactory, with all the tired generalisations and received errors of a mediocre undergraduate essay. For example, the reader is told that Purgatory entered official Church doctrine at the Council of Lyons in 1274. This date is only of significance in the debate with Orthodox Christians. The concept of Purgatory can be found in the *Dialogues* of St Gregory the Great, and the Commemoration of All Souls, introduced at the end of the tenth century, would be pointless without a belief in Purgatory. The discussion of Purgatory could have been set more closely in context by explaining the theology of the quatrain on John Tame's brass:

For Ihesus love pray for me
I may not pray nowe pray ye
With a pater noster & an ave
That my paynys relessyd may be

Perhaps the most disappointing chapter is that by Sally Annesley, dealing with the Tames and Fairford. As the footnotes reveal, this relies on a relatively narrow range of printed material. A little further research would have yielded a much fuller picture of the Tames and their mercantile activities. The discussion of the Tame arms on page 20 is confused. Reference to the Tame genealogy in the 1623 Visitation of Gloucestershire, published by the Harleian Society, would have revealed that that Edmund Tame was the second son, hence the crescent for difference on his arms. It is likely that the Tame arms (*Argent a dragon (or wyvern) vert and a lion azure, crowned gules, combatant*), have a political significance which further investigation could clarify.

One unfortunate borrowing from Wayment is the identification of certain figures as hidden portraits. It is true that there are examples, especially in Quattrocento Italian art, of patrons in the guise of sacred personages. A clear example of this identification with a patron saint is the reliquary in Liège Cathedral, where Charles the Bold and St George are alter egos. But unless there is firm evidence that a portrait is intended, such speculation is best avoided. Otherwise one develops a mentality perilously close to that of Horace Walpole, who saw a Cardinal Beaufort or Morton in every St. Jerome. Following Wayment's lead, Kenneth Munn, in a chapter all too aptly entitled 'Fables and Facts', illustrates supposed hidden portraits of Henry VII, his daughters Mary and Margaret, and Catherine of Aragon alongside recognised portraits of them (although it should be noted that the identification of the Detroit Sittow as representing Catherine of Aragon is very dubious). None of these parallels convinces. The female saints are generalised female types, and the king in the Last Judgement could just as easily be presented as a representation of Edward IV or Richard III.

In one respect this book is of importance for what it portends. It comes with a CD-Rom containing such delights as Robert Hardy reading two seventeenth-

century poems on the windows, a virtual reality 'walk through' of the interior of the church, video clips of the restoration of the glass and an interview with Dr Wayment, and the full text of J.G. Joyce's 1872 study of the glass. The value of some of this is questionable, and it is clear that Lindsay MacDonald, Professor of Multimedia Systems at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, has used the volume as a means of demonstrating the potential of the new technology. The most valuable feature of this CD-Rom is the opportunity it gives to study each panel of glass in close detail. Archaeological publications in recent years have been cursed by the provision of supplementary or specialised information in microfiche format, which can rarely be consulted easily even in academic libraries. The presentation of such material in CD-Rom form in future will greatly increase its accessibility. It is already technically possible to run CD-Roms on a laptop, opening the possibility of *in situ* searches of data.

The glass at Fairford is of high quality, evidently a product of the workshop headed by the King's Glazier, the Netherlander Barnard Flower. Its links with programmes at Windsor and King's College Chapel, Cambridge lend support to the idea that Fairford, a royal manor leased by the Tames, was the recipient of royal patronage. But there is no direct documentary evidence for this to set against Leland's statement that Sir Edmund Tame 'finishid' the church. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Fairford glass is its survival more or less intact. In many churches the only traces of medieval glazing are tracery lights, too inaccessible or insignificant to be smashed. How many Fairfords have we lost?

NICHOLAS ROGERS

THE CHURCH IN THE MEDIEVAL TOWN. Edited by T.R. Slater and G. Rosser. 1998. Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, £46.95. ISBN 1-84014-213-8

'The Church permeated the life of medieval towns. Many towns were founded by churches or had a great church as their chief landlord, property developer or court-holder. The Church was also the creator and administrator of urban parishes, the focus for the religious devotion of the laity — often for its social organization as well — and the inspiration for the town's most important buildings. How can the urban role of the medieval Church be best understood?' Thus Professor Nicholas Brooks prefaced this volume of studies, and the answer was to bring together a group of historians, geographers and field archaeologists, mostly based at the University of Birmingham, in a project funded by the Leverhulme Trust whose aim was to explore the interaction of church and town in medieval England and, in one

case, Ireland. The result — twelve studies, six of them relating to the social and economic dimensions of the problem, the other six to the spaces and built form of towns and their church buildings.

Do we, in fact, get a better understanding of the urban role of the church from them? Emphatically, yes, and along with it new ideas and new approaches, not simply to urban history but to the history of settlements and communities generally. This is important. The coverage is not exhaustive and much of it not fifteenth-century, but there is much for fifteenth-century historians to learn, in terms of approach and methodology. Ceremony as a means of resolving conflict, promoting social cohesion, and defining urban identity is the theme pursued by Rodney Hilton and Gervase Rosser in the first two articles. Hilton, perhaps inevitably, sees social conflict within towns as part of a wider class struggle, whilst Rosser looks in more detail at the long-standing disputes between the citizens of Hereford and the dean and chapter of the cathedral. In both cases, ceremony is seen as a means of promoting the image of the city as the body corporate, an idea and an ideal that had become widespread by the late fourteenth century. Rosser's detailed and comparative study of later medieval Hereford shows how the disputes helped shape the town's identity, and how conflict was used by the mercantile elite to draw the population at large into a debate about the history and purpose of the urban community.

This was creative tension, with conflict resolved through ritual display and harmony achieved. That was not to be the case with the tension between Jew and Christian in English towns after 1066, discussed by John Edwards. Here the resolution was to be brutal, with expulsion in 1290, but as Edwards shows, before that there had been some co-existence until, in the thirteenth century, the attitude of the clergy towards the Jews changed quite radically, or, perhaps, the teachings of the Church were finally put into effect. The new mendicant orders had a key role to play in shaping urban attitudes, and it is their arrival in towns that Jens Röhrkasten explores. In the space of seventy years in the thirteenth century eight mendicant houses were established in London, more than in any other European city. Patronage was crucial to the foundation of their friaries, which had a significant topographical impact on the west of the city. Initially the crown, wealthy lay aristocrats and leading ecclesiastics were important patrons, but they were soon followed by leading citizens, merchants and office holders. So important were they as donors that religious patronage clearly provides a clue to who was who in thirteenth-century London, as it must also in the fifteenth century.

The last two essays in the historical section are economic in approach, but in different ways. Christopher Dyer explores some familiar ground in considering the contribution of the church to the economy of late-medieval towns. As consumers, great monastic or episcopal households had patterns of consumption much like

those of their lay counterparts. They went far afield for their purchases of luxury goods, relying on smaller towns only for their immediate needs. They did not dominate the economies of towns they patronized or where they had a major presence. Towns served the whole of the economy, of which the clergy formed a significant elements. But what Dyer urges, most interestingly, is that we should pay more attention to the aggregate purchasing power of vicars, rectors, chaplains and clerks, who have left few records. Robert Swanson echoes this. He sees parish revenues as a much neglected source, and shows that where parish and town were coterminous, not always the case by any means, then such revenues can provide valuable indicators of a town's economic fortunes. Lynn, in the later middle ages, is a case in point. Its decline can be charted through the revenues of the one large parish, St Margaret's, and although the difficulties involved in identifying and analyzing parish revenues are considerable, nonetheless this is an economic tool worthy of wider application.

This freshness of approach and method is equally evident in the second group of six articles on topography and built forms. B.J.Graham looks at the sites of early and enclosed towns to try to solve the seemingly intractable problem of urban origins in Ireland. Did the monasteries, or the Vikings, or the Anglo-Norman colonists after 1169 play the key role? No, says Graham, towns appeared in Ireland as elsewhere in Europe as part of an emerging feudal society after 800. They were places where secular and ecclesiastical administrations came together on the same site. Yet there is no written evidence to prove this. Everything depends on Graham's analysis of the morphology of the enclosed sites of early towns, and site analysis is also critical in Terry Slater's discussion of Benedictine town planning and Keith Lilley's detailed study of the emergence of Coventry as a major trading centre. Both use town plan analysis as a key tool. This involves the detailed study of large-scale nineteenth-century ordnance survey maps, since they show medieval town plans before their modern destruction. Slater argues that, in the case of St Albans, it was the Abbey that conducted a major exercise in town founding and planning in the tenth century, as its chronicle recorded. The new town was focused on a new, planned market place and as such pointed the way to the hundreds of single-street markets towns that were to be laid out by lay and ecclesiastical landlords in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Coventry's emergence as a major trading city owed everything to the foundation of the Benedictine monastery by Earl Leofric in 1043. Town plan analysis again shows how the key factor was the laying out of the triangular market place, and then the development of land in the prior's part of the town, with streets and trading properties for rent all contributing to the prosperity of the Benedictine priory. The rich topographical legacy fossilized by nineteenth-century surveyors shows the imaginative planning by the monks, and its lasting consequences.

Parishes are the main concern of the last three essays. Nigel Baker and Richard Holt look at parish foundation in Worcester and Gloucester, and the part played by the old minsters in both cities in it. They suggest that parish boundaries were far from fixed in the twelfth century, and that adjustments to them continued well into the late middle ages. This theme of continual change in ecclesiastical provision is continued by Tim Tatton-Brown in his study of the parish churches of Canterbury and by John Blair, who looks at the planning of minster church buildings in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Tatton-Brown's account of the foundation, building and rebuilding of Canterbury's twenty-two medieval churches, of which only eleven survive in whole or part above ground, shows how essential it is to mix historical, archaeological and art history evidence if the response to the changing needs for parish churches is to be properly assessed. Similarly, it is the planning and structure of the new minster church buildings that provides a key to the understanding of how they emerged to serve both collegiate and lay communities, much as the old minsters had. With their aisled naves, double length chancels, crossings, and transepts with eastern chapels, they imitated the cruciform shape of the greater churches of the monastic orders. They provided space for worship for both laymen and ecclesiastics, bringing about that division between lay and priestly areas that is so characteristic of the later middle ages. The planning of these minster churches profoundly influenced the layout of major parish churches for the rest of the middle ages.

What we have here is a whole range of new approaches to old or previously intractable problems, and the use of new techniques to try to solve them. The essays in this volume have opened up the debate on the role of the Church in town formation and town life in exciting ways. The book has been beautifully produced by the publisher, and the cartography is quite outstanding. One can only hope that the second volume, concentrating specifically on Worcester and Gloucester, will not be long delayed.

J.L. BOLTON

THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES? England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. Edited by J.L. Watts. 1998. The Fifteenth Century Series, No. 6. Sutton Publishing, Stroud, £40.

ISBN 0-7509-1828-4

Historians are not always ahead of the game, but with an approaching millennium, it would appear remarkably foresighted that the Fifteenth Century History conference held in Aberystwyth in 1996 should have taken as its theme '1500 and

all that'. Or is it rather '1485 and all that'? Whatever the case, the resulting volume is bound to be of interest to readers of this journal. It does not in itself contain much directly on Richard III. He is mentioned in three of the contributions. In George Bernard's study of 'Vitality and Vulnerability in the late medieval church', he reburies Henry VI. In Steven Gunn's 'Sir Thomas Lovell', we are told of Lovell's role in 'the Tudors' massaging of recent history, arranging with Sir Reynold Bray the construction of Richard III's tomb with its condemnatory but not vilificatory epitaph'. It is left to Colin Richmond, in his study of 'Patronage and Polemic', to manage, with characteristic bravado, not only to put Richard III and Tony Blair into the same sentence, but also Richard III and Richard Nixon. But even these few references will indicate what a diverse volume this is.

Jean-Philippe Genet opens with 'New Politics or new Language? The Words of politics in Yorkist and Early Tudor England'. The 'new' of the title could apply equally to the methodology which Genet applies to the study of political texts, for they are subject to a computer assisted analysis which indicates the most frequently used words and so can suggest changes over time and genre. This is complicated stuff (Genet adds disarmingly, 'as a matter of fact it is even more complicated than this'), but out of the mass of methodological explanation and typological classifications of texts, we can see that there were different political vocabularies for different occasions, such as between Richard, Duke of York's words as protector in 1455 and as claimant to the throne in 1460. Spin doctors might well have been at large in the period. Colin Richmond doubts, however, that the English of the fifteenth century had much in the way of political ideas. Some of the very texts studied by Genet he dismisses as 'bland statements of the blindingly obvious', and he goes on to suggest that it is by deeds rather than words that we, and contemporaries, would judge their rulers. Events rather than ideas are of greater significance.

We are back on *terra firma* with Richard Britnell's study of 'The English Economy and Government 1450-1550', which is a reassuring study of the various constituent elements — exports, manufacturing, taxation, population, and such like. As he points out, the period has been identified as one of 'economic revival (at least) or economic modernization (at best)', but he challenges both views by suggesting continuing sluggishness in the agricultural economy and little development elsewhere save in the cloth industry. Moreover, he reminds us that much that was once placed in this period, such as the growth of commercialisation, can be shown to have existed earlier over a much more extended period. Thus in terms of economic history, the divide of 1500 is seen to be non-existent, except perhaps in a negative sense, for 'such potential for growth as the early sixteenth century economy may have possessed was thwarted, much of the time, by the belligerent ambitions of the monarchy'. There is a similar feeling of 'business as

usual' in Bernard's discussion of the late medieval church which focuses on pilgrimage on the eve of the break with Rome. He is able to show by means of a myriad of examples that pilgrimage remained popular in both senses of that word all the way down (or up) to the Reformation. But within this strength lay potential weakness, for the superstition and magic involved in miracle cures could easily be shown for what it was when the church and government changed its outlook. Like the Emperor's new clothes, relics which had once seemed special and mysterious could soon appear equally ridiculous.

Two of the papers are distinctly Tudor in tone and content. Gunn gives a meticulous account of the career of 'Sir Thomas Lovell. A new man in a new monarchy?' Lovell's rise to prominence would be meteoric by the standards of any age, and he had fingers in almost every pie. He also had an amazingly large retinue, of truly fifteenth-century proportions, although I remain perplexed as to why a third of the burgesses of Henley-on-Thames should be retained by him. Gunn suggests that it was an important aspect of early Tudor policy, 'a mutually beneficial rapprochement between the Crown and its ministers and urban oligarchies', but was it a dumbing down of the gentry retinue he would have liked to have but could not gain? How does it relate to Tudor attempts to control traditional retaining? One is left here, as in other aspects of Lovell's career, with the impression of a new man desperately trying to make it in what was still an old world. With Simon Adams' study of 'Baronial contexts? continuity and change in the noble affinity, 1400-1600' we are reminded of the (very) long fifteenth century in that Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, also had a large affinity. It would seem that Tudor historians should be indebted to their late medieval counterparts for bringing this aspect to the fore. As Adams astutely notes, 'much work has been undertaken on the noble affinity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By contrast my own research into the earl of Leicester and his affinity has been carried out almost *in vacuo*, there being no comparable studies of other Elizabethan peers when I began'. What Adams sees as affinity, however, is partly what late medievalists would call the war retinue, so we are not necessarily comparing like with like. Adams suggests that changes were occurring around 1600: 'membership of a noble affinity was no longer reputable and therefore the possibilities for a great affinity similar to Leicester's would disappear'. If this is the case, then Tudor historians still have a lot of affinity study left to do! But it might also suggest that a major influence was the changing form of military recruitment and organization from the late sixteenth century.

It is in international military affairs that the clearest contrast between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries can, and perhaps should, be drawn. Thus the most telling and original contribution to this volume, to my mind, is Cliff Davies' 'Henry VIII and Henry V: the wars in France'. 'Henry VIII lived in a different

world from his namesake.' But as Davies wisely points out, the *comparative* advantage in overseas activities lay with Henry V. Here, as elsewhere in this volume, the importance of looking at England in a continental context is emphasised. It is one of many themes to which Watts looks in his introduction, reminding us of the theories of the Renaissance as well as of the historiography surrounding 1485/1500 in English traditions. It is a credit to this book that none of the writers gets caught up on tired debates concerning continuity or change — or, to put it another way, 'New Monarchy' versus 'Tudor revolution in government'. All try to say something on the main theme, although it is easier for some than for others. Watts bravely attempts a summing up, and it is hard to see how he could have come to more of a conclusion than he does: 'contributors working on the deeper structures of society, or from less artful sources, are generally less struck by the atmosphere of change than those working near the surface and from more complex, or public, texts'. In other words, when and whether the middle ages end depends on what you look at. The Tudor monarchy wanted to be a new beginning, and men like Lovell were given new opportunities by its coming. But the church had as yet no reason to renounce the past, patronage was still a vital force in politics and society, and, as far as we can tell, the peasantry did not get worked up about the coming of a new dynasty or even a new (half) millennium.

ANNE CURRY

JOHN SHIRLEY. BOOK PRODUCTION AND THE NOBLE HOUSEHOLD IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND. Margaret Connolly. 1998. Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, £47.50
ISBN 1-85928-462-0.

John Shirley (*circa* 1366-1456) has long been recognised for his importance both as a scribe and a witness in the formation of the Chaucer canon. His manuscripts brought works of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate to the attention of some contemporary readers and, since they served as exemplars for some later scribes, ensured the survival of some of those works, while his practice of supplying headings detailing the circumstances of a text's composition proved influential in determining Chaucer's authorship of some minor poems. Nevertheless, Margaret Connolly's is the first book on a man sometimes seen as the 'first English publisher'.

In *John Shirley, Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* Dr Connolly re-evaluates Shirley's life, output, and influence, examining all extant documents relating to him, analysing his three surviving

compilations, discussing other manuscripts he owned, assessing his abilities as a translator, and considering manuscripts which derive from his extant anthologies as well as witnesses to Shirleian volumes now lost. Three appendices provide a study of Shirley's dialect and transcriptions of his verse prefaces and will.

Shirley is first mentioned in a document of 1403 as one of the retinue of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (died 1439). Thereafter his name occurs with increasing frequency in Beauchamp records, and by 1421 he is referred to as the earl's secretary. Secretary and scribe were clearly the same man since Connolly cites a letter in Warwick's name written and signed by John Shirley. By the mid 1430s he had settled in the City of London but remained in close contact with Warwick's household.

The precise nature of Shirley's second career as literary copyist, a question to which most of this book is addressed, has been much debated. Verses Shirley composed for his anthologies ask those who borrowed them to return them when read. Should we infer from his words that Shirley ran a manuscript bookshop in his old age and lent copies for cash? Or was he a gentleman amateur who, in his retirement, copied for his own enjoyment and that of 'all my worthi Lordes and Ladies that I haue serued and of all other my gode frendes', lending books extensively but not as a commercial venture? Connolly argues the latter.

Shirley rented a tenement with four shops in St Bartholomew's Hospital Close and, after his death, his manuscripts became available as exemplars to some London scribes. Their availability to copyists like the so-called 'Hammond scribe', whom some seek to identify with the stationer John Multon (died 1475), has been cited as proof Shirley was running a business. Connolly, like others before her, reasons the shops were sublet to bring Shirley income, since his neighbours (who also rented houses with shops attached) were people unlikely to have been involved in trade. Moreover, as Caxton required only one, four shops seem excessive for any putative business of Shirley's. Connolly further adduces the 'amateurish quality' of his anthologies contrasted with professionally produced volumes such as he owned. The distinction between an amateur and a professional scribe is not so clear-cut as she implies, and Shirley was employed by Warwick for his ability to write.

The communicative headings Shirley supplied to texts have been read by some as a publisher's ploy, an enthusiastic promotion of their contents whereby he hoped to enhance the desirability of his collections. The fact that such headings can err in their attributions of authorship is put down to over-enthusiasm induced by financial considerations. Alternatively, his mistakes are blamed on age or poor memory. Since Connolly argues Shirley's manuscripts circulated privately among his aristocratic contacts and neighbours, she is minded to take his statements at face value, suggesting he was unlikely to have invented the information in his headings

since his copies were intended for a readership who would know the true facts. There seems some danger of a circular argument in her reasoning about Shirley's knowledge of Lydgate: we can take Shirley's statements on trust because Shirley knew Lydgate, but it is the information Shirley provides that proves he knew Lydgate. Did Shirley never rely on gossip?

Some dozen manuscripts were owned, used or copied by Shirley (a list of them would have been helpful). Connolly suggests he may also have once owned the early fifteenth-century psalter left by his sister-in-law, Beatrice Cornburgh, to the Franciscan nuns of the Virgin and St Francis without Aldgate (now in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ, and unaccountably omitted from her *Index of Manuscripts*). This can only be regarded as speculation since it does not appear as if the obits of the original owner's family, whose surname is missing, were added in Shirley's hand. Books connected with him often have a distinctive monogram which, like other evidence concerning Shirley, has been interpreted two ways: either as double 'a' or 'm', standing for 'amor' or 'maria'. Connolly argues the latter, since Shirley was buried in Our Lady's Chapel at St Bartholomew's and had a lily on his seal. The Beauchamp family he served also had a devotion to Mary.

The interpretation of the nature of Shirley's activities rests on the balance of probabilities. Dr Connolly's assessment is probably correct, even if I am not impressed by all of her arguments. The polite verse he copied provides an important clue to his readership. Such verse was fashionable among the 'lettered chivalry' of the day, as evidenced by other contemporary anthologies. Whether Shirley was responding to fashion or helping create it, the view that a retired secretary occupied his time compiling books of Chaucerian verse to lend them free to his 'Lords and Ladies', thereby continuing to serve them, seems to fit better into the picture of fifteenth-century manuscript production emerging from recent research than the notion Shirley ran a commercial bookshop-cum-lending library.

PAMELA ROBINSON

THE CRIMINAL TRIAL IN LATER MEDIEVAL ENGLAND. J.G. Bellamy.
1998. Sutton Publishing Limited, Stroud, £40.

ISBN 0-7509-1707-5

Despite the survival of large quantities of legal records it has not yet been possible to analyse fully all aspects of criminal trial procedure in late medieval and early modern England. The problem is posed by the nature of the surviving sources in which some elements of the trial are well documented while others, e.g. the use of

witnesses, the role of legal counsel or the relationship between judge and jury remain obscure, being neither reflected in the plea rolls nor having attracted much attention by contemporary legal commentators.

Bellamy's most recent volume offers a survey of key aspects with a number of interesting thoughts and speculations. Elements of the criminal trial are traced from the thirteenth century to the reign of Elizabeth. This long-term approach is one of the strengths of the book. Particular attention is paid to the different forms of accusation, to verdicts, conviction rates and to pardons. Major felonies are discussed, Appendix 1 offers an excellent survey of the complicated legislation on rape and abduction while forgery, arson and other less frequently appearing felonies receive a rather brief treatment in Appendix 2. Apart from covering a long period and providing a helpful introduction for non-specialists (glossary, notes on commentators and sources, pp. 195-200) the author raises issues to which attention should be paid in future research. One of these is the role of the courts' clerks who were partly responsible for the potential differences between the actual events of an incident and their representation in the records. They acted as translators and used a standardised terminology, a process which may have had a significant influence on the information available today. Other points are the relationship between defendant and jurors, the strategies pursued by justices in court and the question of whether all those found guilty of felony who were sentenced were actually executed.

It is to be expected that a thorough treatment of the subject is not possible in a book covering four centuries on 200 pages. There is no bibliography and not all modern studies were included. Equally only a selection of sources could be used. While the legislation has been comprehensively analysed and legal treatises from Glanvill to Coke were consulted, the use of legal records is very patchy. Statistics are based on published sources relating to one or at best a small number of counties or were taken from a small selection of more detailed studies. The use and comparison of selective statistics, e.g. gaol delivery material from thirteenth-century Wiltshire and fifteenth-century Yorkshire (p. 82) may not be the best way to show general trends, since regional and local differences need to be taken into account. This is an important qualification because the identification of long-term changes, especially the drop of conviction rates after the Black Death and their increase in the Tudor period are important results of this book. The subject still requires attention and it is likely that more progress will be made by more detailed studies.

JENS RÖHRKASTEN

This is a highly ambitious work: it attempts a survey of virtually all things equine in a military context throughout the period right across the world. Divided into four very unequal Parts, it falls, roughly speaking, into two halves, the first dealing with Europe during the period, and the second with the Orient, India, and the European conquests and settlements in the Americas. The subjects of this second half alone cover vast areas of interest, and though such brief treatments as contained in this book can only skim the surface, they may, nonetheless, be of interest for the contrasts to be drawn with the better known role of the warhorse in the Medieval and Tudor West.

This concession made, it has to be said that this is not an altogether successful book. Ann Hyland, whom the jacket describes as 'a horse trainer and writer', clearly knows a great deal about horses past and present, and her enthusiasm for her subject is plain, but her presentation quite fails to absorb. It is not so much the diversity of all those aspects of the horse in the context of war that she tackles, nor the chronological or geographical range of the period — rather it is an unevenness of weight and a preference to recite facts with very little discussion and analysis. Thus she gives too much attention to ancillary matters which frequently are larded with barrages of examples that add negligibly to understanding, while conversely she gives comparatively little attention to what one would have thought would have been the main item on the agenda — the horse actually at war. This is especially a pity because where the text does approach this central subject of the use and performance of the horse in combat, Hyland rightly steers us to the conclusion that, at this time in the West, the warhorse was, by and large, a luxury — a symbol of chivalry that was ineffective in battle but which maintained its presence there because of that ineradicable vanity of nobility held by the mounted aristocracy and gentry.

Hyland makes it incessantly emphatic that warhorses were expensive, difficult to sustain properly, subject to stress and a variety of diseases which she attempts to explore, and frequently slaughtered or maimed in great numbers through mismanagement on campaign or in battle. Understandably, she lambasts the myopia of the English at Bannockburn ('cavalry used in the stupidest manner') and of the French at Poitiers ('French horse usage was stupid'). However, this picture of the inefficacy or redundancy even of the warhorse, suffers from commencing only in the late thirteenth century, without placing the period against the context of what had happened in the early Middle Ages. In this respect, it is odd that the timeframe of the book starts at c. 1250, for certainly up until a series of battles around 1300 of which Bannockburn was one (*cf.* Courtrai in 1302 and Morgarten

in 1315), the warhorse had, in general, dominated the battlefield. It is therefore all the more peculiar that Hyland should say that in the later Middle Ages in Europe, 'the horse was exceptionally important'. Indeed, when she says later, of the same period, that 'the warhorse's importance peaked; as cavalry became accustomed to fight on foot ...', we are left wondering what it is we are reading about.

In sum, this book is hard to enjoy. Too often the reader cannot see the wood for the trees. Standing back from it, I felt I had emerged from an encyclopaedia to which I may return for data, but not for understanding. For that, one would be better served, for the warhorse in the West at least, by resorting to R.H.C. Davis' *The Medieval Warhorse, Origin, Development and Redevelopment* (London 1989), reviewed *ante* vol. 8, no. 110, September 1990, pp. 459-61. It is perhaps significant that Hyland makes no reference to it.

J. PETRE

THE GOVERNANCE OF KINGS AND PRINCES. John Trevisa's Middle English Translation of the *De Regimine Principum* of Aegidius Romanus. Edited by David C. Fowler, Charles F. Briggs, and Paul Remley. 1997. Garland Medieval Texts 19. Garland Publishing, Inc., New York and London. £68

ISBN 0-8153-1454-X

Given the fact that I have heard people claim without reservations that Aegidius Romanus — Giles of Rome — was a defender of absolutism, this edition, which makes the contents of his political work more accessible, is highly welcome. Considering, however, that very few people in the fifteenth century had access to Trevisa's translation, perhaps an edition of the original Latin, with a modern translation, would have been more useful for political, social and general historians of today; students of middle English may not agree. Most scholars, politicians and 'common' readers in England in the later middle ages who knew *De regimine*, knew the Latin text; Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was one of them (see *Richard III's Books*, *passim*). It was the Latin text that influenced their views — unless they had a French translation.

The *De regimine* was composed 1277-79 for the benefit of the son of the king of France, the future Philip IV, the Fair. The author was an Augustinian friar, the first master of his order at the university of Paris, and a pupil of St Thomas Aquinas. His 'mirror for princes', a blend of pagan and Christian thought, became the most influential of all such works. It strongly emphasises the value of virtuous living in all areas of private and public life and is directed at all men, not just

rulers. One of its standard phrases is: 'It is necessary that kings and princes *and all men...*'.

The manuscript — Bodleian Library MS Digby 233 — of which the text is printed in the present edition, is the only surviving copy of the Middle English translation made at the very end of his life by John Trevisa (died 1402), chaplain to Thomas, Lord Berkeley (died 1417). The translation was probably unfinished; it created problems for the scribe and did not become as well known as Trevisa's other translations, Higden's *Polychronicon* and Bartholomew the Englishman's *De proprietatibus rerum*. The present volume is only the first of the full two-part edition and contains a short general and editorial preface and the text itself. The next volume will contain further discussion of textual problems and a commentary and, presumably, a bibliography and an index.

It may be useful to give one example of the text (my computer does not do thorn and yogh, which the editors have maintained):

For yif a man is kyndeliche sociale beste and componible as is preued,
primo Poleticorum, it nedeth, in dedes and wordes in the whiche he
comyneth with othere, to haue som vertue by the whiche men may haue
good co[n]uersacioun. Wherefore right resoun wol mene that by diuersete
of persones conuersacioun schal be diuers. They alle men that wol leue in
pollici and comynthe schulde be amycabiles and affabiles, frendlich and
good to speke with, notheles not alle men ben, nother schulde be,
amicabiles in the same wise.

(My translation of the Latin:

If man is a social animal, as the first book of the *Politics* essentially
proves, he should possess a kind of virtue which makes him behave
correctly in the words and deeds by which he communicates with others.
Reason expects that different people behave in different ways; although
all men who want to live in a civilised manner must be amiable and kind,
not all men need be amiable in the same way. Bk 1, Pt 2, ch. 28).

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

BESTIARIES AND THEIR USERS IN THE MIDDLE AGES. Ron Baxter.
1998. Sutton Publishing, Stroud, with the Courtauld Institute, London, £25.00.

ISBN 0-7509-1853-5.

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, there has developed a standard argument that the richly-illustrated medieval Bestiaries provided a system of mystical and symbolic zoology upon which carvers in wood and stone and painters

in glass drew for their models. The Bestiaries were supposedly based on the early Christian text, *The Physiologus*, and they proliferated in Europe, and particularly in England, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This arguments rests on a series of basic propositions, namely that there is a discursive unity called 'The Bestiary', comprising the entire body of textual recensions, both Latin and French, which, in a broad sense, demonstrates the medieval understanding of the animal world; that 'The Bestiary' is a medieval encyclopaedia of zoology, with moralizations; that its moralizations were so widely understood that the Bestiary imagery could be taken to imply symbolic meanings when it occurred in stone sculpture and wood carving; that Bestiaries were to be found in every monastic library of any size; and that their currency extended into the fifteenth century.

These five propositions have formed the basis of debate ever since. Baxter, in his rigorous analysis of all studies of the Bestiaries from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, along with the manuscript texts themselves, concludes that the first and fifth points are now no longer contentious issues. M.R. James showed in 1928 that there was no real unity but four separate 'families' of bestiary texts. Baxter himself would argue that the idea that their currency extended into the fifteenth century has been a dead issue since 1955. Yet surely that is not the case. Christa Grössinger, in her fascinating study *The World Upside Down. English Misericords* (London, 1997) believes that 'the themes carved on the misericords were generally taken from romances, burlesques, everyday life, with much satire, especially of the clergy, and a great number of monstrous hybrids based on the *Bestiary*' (my italics). But this is not one of Baxter's main interests. He is primarily concerned with challenging the second and the fourth of the propositions, that the Bestiary was a medieval encyclopaedia of zoology with moralizations, and that the Bestiary was to be found in every monastic library of any size. He also looks critically at the additional theory, advanced by Muratova, that the texts were chiefly produced at Lincoln cathedral school and at other centres in the east Midlands.

It is, to say the least, a complex argument, based on close textual analysis and on the dating and distribution of Bestiaries in monastic libraries. Only the main conclusions of what is clearly an important and possibly controversial study can be considered here. Dr Baxter shows that the basic second-century Greek text, *The Physiologus*, was not an early work of zoology, but a structured treatise on virtue and vice, designed for reading aloud to an illiterate or semi-literate audience of monks or novices. By the time the text came to England in the tenth century, through the agency of Bishop Aethelwold who gave a copy to the refounded Peterborough Abbey, it had already undergone changes. It was now described as a *Liber Bestiarum* and had additions from Isidore of Seville's *Entymologiae* attached to it, marking a shift from Christian moralization to a description of Creation based

on the most popular encyclopaedic compilation of ancient authorities then available. The text was then modified in various stages. Existing chapters were restructured to demonstrate not virtue and vice but the Genesis story of the Creation. New chapters and new beasts were added and the work became more of a reference book than a lecture script. It was kept in the theology section of monastic libraries, where it was clearly used as a source of sermon examples, along with the *summae* and *distinctiones*. In no sense was it a medieval zoology, since concepts of zoology did not exist. Finally, Dr Baxter turns to questions of who made the Bestiaries, and when and where they were made. When is more easily answered than where: overwhelmingly in the last third of the twelfth and in the thirteenth century, and scarcely at all thereafter. The notion that the Bestiaries were produced in the cathedral school at Lincoln and elsewhere in the east Midlands is certainly challenged here. The analysis of monastic library catalogues shows concentrations of texts in and around Canterbury, Peterborough, Meaux Abbey in Holderness, and York. These were centres of use: were they also centres of production? Dr Baxter believes so, but little evidence is offered to prove the point. More interesting and convincing is the analysis of the distribution of texts in the libraries of the various monastic orders. Most were to be found in Benedictine houses, but probably only because there were more Benedictine houses than any others. But the strike rate per thousand in each library is highest amongst the Yorkshire Cistercian houses, and especially Meaux and Rievaulx, and certainly much use seems to have been made of them in Cistercian sermons, particularly those of Ailred of Rievaulx.

Dr Baxter's work is rigorous and compelling, although very densely argued. It is an object lesson in how a text both changes and is changed over time, in both purpose and content. It revises all previous work on Bestiaries, but whether it is quite the last word Dr Baxter would have us think is another matter. It should provoke quite a lively debate. What it is not is a 'picture book', although it is well and appositely illustrated, and, quite interestingly, what it does not provide is any link between Bestiaries and church carvings. That has already been done by other authors, some of whom may be less willing to accept the argument that by the fifteenth century Bestiaries were no longer widely read or sources for the images used by carvers.

J.L. BOLTON

Notes on Contributors

J.L. Bolton was a Senior Lecturer in the History Department at Queen Mary and Westfield College from 1965 to 1994 and is now Senior Research Fellow in the Centre of Medieval and Renaissance Studies there.

Anne Curry is Senior Lecturer in History and currently Head of Department at the University of Reading. Her research focuses on the armies of Henry V and Henry VI.

P.W. Hammond, Research Officer of the Society. His most recent publication is *The Complete Peerage*, Vol 14, *Addenda et Corrigenda*.

J.F. Merritt is the Director of the Stuart London Project and a research fellow in the History Department of the University of Sheffield.

James Petre, Head of Operations for the Institute of Legal Executives. A Chartered Secretary; he has been a member of the Society since 1967, and currently is Secretary of the Richard III and Yorkist History Trust.

Pamela Robinson is Lecturer in Palaeography, Institute of English Studies, University of London, and compiler of a *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c.737-1600 in Cambridge Libraries* (1988).

Jens Röhrkasten, lecturer in history at the University of Birmingham has published on English medieval criminal law and is currently preparing a history of the mendicant houses of medieval London.

Nicholas Rogers, the Archivist of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, is the author of numerous articles on various aspects of medieval culture, and Editor of the *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*.

Gordon Smith, medical librarian, member since 1993. Publications include *The Evan Bedford Library of Cardiology* (Royal College of Physicians, 1977), and 'Alfano and Turandot' (*Opera* 1973).

Shelley A. Sinclair is an Associate Professor of European History at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse.

RICHARD III SOCIETY

The following books and off-prints are available from the Sales Office, PO Box 247, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 5FF. Prices include p&p; overseas members to add 10% for surface and 25% for airmail; cheques to be in sterling.

The Crowland Chronicle Continuations 1459-1486. Edited N. Pronay and J. Cox. £18.50.

York House Books 1461-1490. Edited L. Attreed. 2 vols. £29 (vol.), £55 (set).

'Edward IV's memoir on paper to Charles Duke of Burgundy'. [The Arrival]. L. Visser-Fuchs. Off-print £4.50.

The Battle of Wakefield. K. Dockray and R. Knowles. Off-print £2.50.

The Household Books of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, 1462-1471 and 1481-1483. Reduced fac. reprint, new introd. A. Crawford. £29.50.

Richard III and the Princes in the Tower. A. J. Pollard. £14.75 (pb).

The Hours of Richard III. A. F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs. £12.95 (pb).

The Politics of Fifteenth Century England. John Vale's Book. Edited M. L. Kekewich and others. £29.

'The cult of angels in fifteenth-century. An hours of the Guardian Angel presented to Queen Elizabeth Woodville'. A. F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs. Off-print £2.50.

Margaret of York Duchess of Burgundy 1446-1503. C. Weightman. £14.95.

Richard III's Books. A. F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs. £25.

The Ricardian. Index to Vol. X, 1994-96. £3.50. Earlier indexes available.

Harleian Ms 433. Edited R. Horrox and P. Hammond. 4 vols. £18.50 (vol.), £60 (set).

Good King Richard?. J. Potter. £10.95 (pb).

Richard III, Crown and People. Edited J. Petre. £16.50.