

Book Reviews

RICHARD III AND BUCKINGHAM'S REBELLION. Louise Gill. 1999.
Sutton Publishing Ltd, Stroud, £18.99. ISBN 0-7509-1686-9

The rebellion against Richard III which erupted throughout the southern counties of England in the autumn of 1483 was almost certainly the pivotal event of his short reign. The production of a single volume study of Buckingham's rebellion is fully justified by the momentous events of 1483. In the space of a few months, Richard survived the defections of servants from within the royal household, leading gentry figures from regional centres throughout the south of England, and of former confidants such as Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, all of whom had helped to secure the successful seizure of the throne only a few months earlier—in June 1483. The rebels failed in their attempts to replace Richard as king, yet the response of the crown in re-establishing control over the south, and Richard's failure to eliminate Henry Tudor's development as a rival claimant to the throne, ensured that the crushing of the rebellion only heralded deeper dynastic and security problems for the Ricardian regime. The rebellion is therefore the key event of Richard's reign, and Louise Gill's work is important since the national impact of the rebellion has not before been the subject of a separate published study.

One of the main difficulties with Gill's book, however, is that the rebellion itself is not investigated as vigorously as the title would suggest. The focus of the work is much stronger on the political culture of the gentry of southern England during the period 1471-1485. Detailed sections concerning the rebellion itself are restricted largely to a narrative discussion based on existing published works and a chief manuscript source: Richard III's first pardon roll, Public Record Office, C 67/51. The author states that the study is an attempt to analyse the political culture of the south of England, to balance the more numerous studies of Richard's northern affinity. Gentry networks were the key to the organisation and mobilisation of the rebels, and the author's determination to unveil the marital and social connections which linked rebels at a local level and within the royal

household often detracts from detail and analysis of the rebellion itself, which occupies a chapter of twenty-three pages only. The book therefore offers a framework on to which the allegiances and loyalties of the rulers of southern England are projected. Nevertheless, it treads much of the same ground as Rosemary Horrox, *Richard III: A Study of Service* (Cambridge 1989), and does not depart from Horrox's conclusions about the importance of the 1483 rising as the turning point of the reign.

The course of the rebellion has been understood in detail for some time. A. E. Conway, 'The Maidstone Sector of Buckingham's Rebellion, October 18, 1483,' *Archaeologia Cantiana*, volume 37 (1925), still remains the best work on the regional rising in Kent. R. A. Griffiths and S. Thomas, *The Making of the Tudor Dynasty* (Gloucester 1985), provides detail on Henry Tudor's involvement in this first attempt to place him on the throne. Furthermore, Gill concedes in the bibliography to Chapter 5 that, 'Horrox, *Richard III*, Chapter 3, is far and away the leading work on the rebellion'. This suggests strongly that Gill's own book has a stronger emphasis on the relationships between the southern gentry and the crown, and that Buckingham's rebellion was the major event in modifying and developing those relationships during the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

The book is divided into analytical and chronological sections. The introduction and first chapter offer an abstract of the work, a short summary of the rebellion and a chronological investigation of the primary, printed and secondary sources used as a basis for the book. One of the most interesting sections of Gill's book investigates contemporary, near contemporary and antiquarian accounts of Buckingham's rebellion. What is not discussed directly, however, is the work of modern historians such as Rosemary Horrox and Charles Ross who have addressed the rebellion in great detail, and in the case of Horrox, in the context of a sophisticated study of Ricardian service networks and relationships. The second chapter, 'Kings, Lords and Landlords' looks in detail at the development of gentry networks and connections to the crown in the southern counties of England during the period of the 'Wars of the Roses'. This chapter investigates marriage connections in forging the links between lesser aristocratic and gentry families, ties through local office, and also the settling of disputes. Gill also weaves in Buckingham's extensive landholding in the south, as a way of linking him to the networks of county families and to those who rebelled in 1483 (although he was one of many absentee nobles who controlled important southern estates). The investigation of gentry control of the localities of southern England proceeds rapidly through service in the law and in estate administration, to those who served directly in the royal household of Edward IV — the core body of those who would rebel in 1483. The attempt to provide a background framework of regional connection between the families who rejected Richard III's rule in 1483, and the

service of those same families at court and in the royal household is a worthy and necessary one for the scope of this book, and is developed skillfully. The third chapter examines how these gentry groups interacted throughout the political events of the 1460s and 70s, and confirms the accepted McFarlanite view that patronage, service and loyalty, as well as individual greed, drove the regional 'powers that be' in their search for greater wealth and influence. The question of an ideological adherence to principles of loyalty is not addressed. The following chapters (four to eight) respectively take a broadly chronological and narrative path through Richard's usurpation; the rebellion; the crown response to the rising; the growth of a real challenge to Richard's throne; and the Bosworth campaign. In this, the discussion follows closely that offered by Horrox in *Richard III: A Study of Service*. Greater focus is obviously given to the southern gentry and their role in Tudor's invasion, and in Richard's downfall, and much detail is provided by the pardon roll (PRO, C 67/51) and by warrants for the great seal (PRO class C 81).

It is only in the final, very brief, concluding chapter that any parallel is drawn between Richard III's failure and Henry VII's success in establishing crown control over a significant part of the whole of England. This is unfortunate, since there are a number of parallels in the challenges faced by the two kings and in the nature of their responses to those problems. Of major importance was the defection of major figures within the household and a number of lesser household servants. Richard lost the loyalty of Edward IV's household servants in the nature of his usurpation, with the murders of Rivers, Grey and Hastings, and with the disappearance and murder of his nephews. Henry lost the tentative support of Ricardians brought into the regime in a conciliatory move to broaden the base of Tudor support after the appearance of the pretender Lambert Simnel and the Yorkshire risings of 1486 and 1487. Henry also was unable to maintain the allegiance of solidly Yorkist nobles such as Sir William Stanley and Lord Fitzwalter once Perkin Warbeck revived dormant Yorkist loyalties after 1492. The loss of Ricardian influence in southern England was countered by a transfer of northern loyalists into the administration of the southern counties. Henry VII faced a similar vacuum of authority in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and in the north generally, after Bosworth. The solutions sought by both kings to such problems of crown authority could usefully be compared, but this would give Gill's book a broader chronological sweep, and would make it more of a general analysis of late fifteenth century rebellion than clearly was intended.

The core theme of Gill's book is a sample study of fifty-five leaders of the rebellion, and this investigation is based on Richard III's first pardon roll (PRO, C 67/51). By linking evidence of pardons to lists of known rebels from various sources, such as parliamentary attainders, Richard's proclamations, indictments

and chronicle sources such as Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historica*, some picture of the crown response to the rising is uncovered. Most of these pardons have been printed in the *Calendar of Patent Rolls*. Such documents are sparse in the detail they supply — listing the name, aliases and places of residence of those receiving pardon. Modern researchers have had to supply additional evidence to link those pardons to specific instances of rebellion or more general crimes. While many of those were certainly involved in Buckingham's rebellion, some of those listed on the roll probably received their pardons for crimes at the common law. Evidence of gentry association is used to connect those involved in the rebellion, but more direct and convincing evidence seems to have been overlooked in this work. This evidence is the crown demand for bonds for allegiance and good behaviour, frequently required as a condition of the grant of pardon. Although the practice was much more widespread under Henry VII, evidence does survive for Richard III's of the use of bonds in the response to Buckingham's rebellion. Many of these bonds were imposed before the royal council, and for Richard's reign, many are extant among documents recording those who were compelled to appear under a financial penalty (PRO, class C 244, corpus cum cause writs). For example, William Berkeley of Beverstone was pardoned in March 1484, and his uncle Edward and brother-in-law, John, Lord Stourton, were bound under 1000 marks for his allegiance. Berkeley's defection to Henry Tudor caused the forfeiture of the bond (PRO, C 244/131/31). Other rebels, such as Richard Woodville and John Fogge were bound under 1000 marks for their allegiance before pardons were issued in January 1485 (PRO, C 244/136/130). Other pardons were granted without petition as Richard became more acutely insecure, as more southern gentry defected to Henry Tudor during late 1484. So although the discussion of the rebellion is based almost exclusively on evidence of pardons, an analysis of the use of royal pardon by Richard in the search for support is not really developed within the book. Was the widespread distribution of pardons by Richard after the rebellion evidence of his weakness as king (the need to appease those influential people involved), or was the issue of pardons an example of royal accommodation and conciliation towards former enemies, a policy seemingly employed by Henry VII in the North Riding after the risings of 1486 and 1487? Although Richard's imposition of the northern gentry into the administration of the southern counties in 1484 was ultimately calamitous, many southern gentry were pardoned by the crown before Bosworth. This might point to Richard's wish to develop the loyalty of the southern gentry families. As Rosemary Horrox pointed out, the rebellion obliged Richard to 'equate security with the use of his own associates' (*Richard III: A Study of Service*, p. 223). To rule the south Richard had to maintain greater control over his northern followers, who had suddenly been given much greater national responsibility, and this too may have created unwelcome pressure on

Richard's personal and long-standing relationships which finally told at Bosworth, where many of his closest followers failed to fight for him. Also, since Richard had to try to move away from any reputation he had as primarily a northern king, the need to develop new associates within the south may also have been part of a developing policy of accommodation, which was curtailed abruptly by defeat at Bosworth.

Gill develops a general background of the ties and associations between the gentry of the south, and the defections of former servants of Edward IV within Richard's household. But against this study, there is no discussion of the significance and extent of an ideology of allegiance to the crown as an institution, rather than to the nobleman who occupied it. This would have been very useful, since Richard's power was firmly rooted in his personal control over the Neville lands and affinity in the north. Those who rose against Richard were, on the whole, supporters of his dead brother who hoped to see the Yorkist line continue in Edward V. Most interesting were those rebels — even some who were attainted — who eventually accommodated with the Ricardian regime, thus giving some tacit recognition of its legitimacy. This too, could have been compared usefully to Henry VII's efforts to impose his authority on the country after 1485, had it been within the scope of the book.

The book demonstrates an impressive grasp of the relationships and loyalties of the gentry of the southern counties at the end of Edward IV's reign. Yet this material is often presented as lists of names, all of which pre-suppose some knowledge of the subject matter. It is frequently difficult to keep up with the copious information coming from the page — especially in the first four chapters of the book. The occasional clumsy turn of phrase also stands out, but this does not really detract from these chapters, which must have been difficult to construct. There are obvious difficulties in discovering and exploiting new manuscript material when based in Australia, as Dr Gill is. With this in mind, what is perhaps an over-reliance on a single source, albeit one which has not been fully analysed before, may have restricted opportunities to explore more deeply the wider material linking individuals to the rebellion. With Buckingham's rebellion presented as the pivotal event of the reign, and with so much space given to explaining the networks and relationships of the southern gentry which existed before 1483, further investigation of events after 1485, and the longer-term changes wrought by the southern risings of 1483, may have given the book greater balance. Nevertheless, this does not undermine what is a detailed overview of the involvement of the gentry of the southern counties in the turmoil of events during the period 1483-85, and one which, hopefully, heralds further investigations of Richard III's complex relationship with the south of England.

SEAN CUNNINGHAM

Dr Woolgar's study of the late medieval household has grown out of his work on their accounts, samples of which he edited as *Household Accounts from Medieval England* (2 vols, British Academy 1992-3). The fact that accounts form his major source does much to shape this book, which is primarily concerned with the practicalities of how households functioned rather than with their social or cultural role. Put like that, it might sound rather dry, but that would be very far from the truth. The minutiae of daily life is perennially fascinating and the accounts allow Dr Woolgar to speak with authority on such unexpected issues as how often the henchmen of the Duke of Buckingham changed their shirts in the summer of 1501. One of those henchmen, incidentally, is named as Anthony Woodville, which raises the interesting question of who that might be, given that the barony of Rivers had become extinct with the death of Richard Woodville without heirs in 1491. Whoever he was, he changed his shirt about once a week – less than his lord, who got through at least two shirts a week. There is discussion of personal washing and hygiene, too – almost all human activities, after all, involve *some* expense and are likely to show up, however fleetingly, in accounts. The chapter on 'The Senses, Religion and Intellectual Life' (in which bathing occurs) is inevitably slimmer than those on 'Space and Residences' or 'Food and Drink' but offers some useful insights.

Perhaps the book's greatest strength is the clear sense it gives of the logistical challenge posed by these great households, with their need to put on a reliably impressive show in spite of dramatic fluctuations in size and a peripatetic lifestyle. When a larger than usual influx of visitors was expected, local carpenters would knock-up the necessary benches and trestles – a simpler expedient than keeping extra furniture in store against the day when it might be needed. Or someone would go out and buy 1000 earthenware dishes. One is left regretting that, inevitably, the people we see are the beneficiaries of all this effort, not the officials and servants who made it all happen, who remain, at best, mere names. Accounts, inevitably, have their limitations. But what Dr Woolgar does supremely well is to draw out the patterns of daily life which lie behind the terse entries. In the process he is revealing about how the accounts can mislead as well as inform. If a household was likely to be settled in one spot for some time, for instance, many of the horses would be, literally, put out to grass elsewhere (sometimes a considerable distance away) rather than being housed in the stables. As a result, as Woolgar points out, using the number of horses in royal or aristocratic stables as some index of household size is profoundly misleading.

Inevitably much of the book is given over to example, but broad lines of argument do emerge, such as the widening difference in size between the royal and

aristocratic households in the later middle ages, and the difference in scale between royal and lordly consumption. In general, though the *purpose* of all this expense is left for the reader to construct. In that respect this book is usefully complemented by Kate Mertes' *The English Noble Household 1250-1600* (1988, now out of print), which is more concerned with the household as a social or political entity and, although drawing on accounts, touches on actual expenditure relatively rarely. The two books dovetail well, and it is curious that Woolgar seems never to cite the Mertes volume, although he does draw on one of her articles.

As a survey of 'the grand operations of domestic living that characterised the medieval great household' (p. 4), though, this is a splendid book, intelligently as well as generously illustrated (although some of the photographs of surviving buildings look to have been taken on a very grey day) and with a thorough index. The study of daily life, the author's avowed aim, is an up and coming area of historical investigation in which England still lags noticeably behind the rest of Europe. This is a persuasive indication of what can be done – or done at least for the south of England and Wales. The families and individuals selected for particular attention are exclusively from south of the Humber and the most northerly place thought necessary to be included in the accompanying map is Lincoln. Presumably the great northern households lived by similar rhythms, but it would have been interesting to have had some discussion of the possibility of geographical variation.

ROSEMARY HORROX

THE CASE FOR WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL CULTURE. Alcuin Blamires. 1997. The Clarendon Press, Oxford, £40.95 (hardback), £14.99 (paperback).

ISBN 0-19-818256-2 (hb); 0-19-818630-4 (pb)

This is an excellent book: well-written, learned and illuminating. As the word 'case' in the title indicates, it is not a general survey of medieval defences of women, but a history and analysis of a particular medieval discourse, the 'corpus of ideas about how to fashion a commendation of women [...] against misogyny' (p. 2). In practice, Alcuin Blamires covers much of the more general ground too, but his specific concern with the arguments most commonly employed in defences of women sharpens his book's focus, produces new insights on well-known writers like Christine de Pizan, and brings lesser-known authors to the fore. Among the latter it is good to see the influential but still too much neglected Jean Le Fèvre. Inevitably the book also introduces its readers to the favourite strategies of the enemy too, the

misogynists, for misogyny dictated many of the terms on which the battle to defend women was to be fought. Thus much of the book deals with rebuttals of the claims that women were incapable of stable purpose, reason or constancy, tainted through descent from Eve, or only worthy of respect in as far as they were mothers, obedient wives, or gentle and patient under male tyranny.

This is no mere survey of ideas: it is full of critical acumen and originality. Blamires shows, for example, how central to Abelard's writings about women was his perception that 'the case for women had to be built on claims for their foundational importance' (p. 203). He explores the deep ambiguities within many male defences of women, and the evasions, opportunism and facetiousness fostered by the debate tradition in which many of them were conceived. Blamires uses 'profeminine' rather than 'feminist' to mark awareness of the differences between the often misogynist assumptions discernable with the medieval case for women and the principles of modern feminism. Beginning with literary genres that present formal or quasi-judicial defences of women, such as debates and commendations rooted in scholastic exercises, Blamires includes, among other interesting topics, an illuminating account of Albertanus' *Liber consolationis*, familiar as the source of Chaucer's *Melibee*. After considering defences of women based on motherhood, women's constancy, Eve and Mary, the book moves on to the arguments which cite female role models and famous women. Blamires' discussion of Old Testament figures, such as Deborah and Esther, in this context, argues that, in the very act of praising their ability to perform as well or better as men, male medieval writers often reassimilate them to patriarchy by stressing such qualities as obedience. He sees androcentric control of the literature as successful in 'tranquillizing' the evidence from history of strong, able and authoritative women, and yet unable to neutralize completely the destabilizing effects of such evidence on the arguments for male executive supremacy. Hrotswitha's resolutely chaste heroines, in his view, exemplify not just the classic female religious heroine's 'strength in weakness' but also the power of women's voices when raised against oppression. The book gives a useful account of medieval arguments about women's right to preach. Building on earlier research, the section on the Samaritan woman (pp. 194-8) casts light on the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*. There is a perceptive analysis of Chrétien's Laudine in the context of calumniated women in romance. Blamires' last chapter examines three authors in detail: Abelard, Chaucer and Christine de Pizan.

My only criticisms are that Blamires does not extend his investigation much beyond the early fifteenth century, thus excluding some important developments, and that, though in practice he frequently addresses the modern feminist and other cultural and theoretical issues raised by the methods of medieval authors' 'case for women', it would have been helpful to devote more space in the book specifically to analysing, from the point of view of modern gender studies, the origins and

implications of the medieval apologists' often patently legalistic, masculinist, and even cynical modes and arguments. These two criticisms of mine are, basically, a wish the book had been longer, and, all in all, there is no doubt that *The Case for Women*, with its clarity, scholarship and perceptiveness, will establish itself as a valuable study for both students and scholars of the medieval period and of the history of feminism. Blamires writes of Abelard's 'vigilant eye', enabling him 'to rebalance women's history so as to produce fascinating results', and of a sense of discovery and intellectual daring, 'a new surge of electricity', that Abelard brings to pro-feminine topoi. The same could be said of his own book.

HELEN PHILLIPS

PILGRIM SOUVENIRS AND SECULAR BADGES. Brian Spencer. *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London*, 7. 1998. The Museum of London and the Stationery Office, London, £50. ISBN 0-11-290574-9

It was partly in an attempt to stop religious tourists chipping and scraping bits off the monuments of the Holy Land to take them home as souvenirs that pilgrim badges were invented in the second half of the twelfth century. It was one thing for hundreds of pilgrims to carry away small bottles of Jordan water, but if all of them – like Felix, a German monk, did in the fifteenth century – had hung upside down in the well where Jesus met the woman from Samaria and pilfered yet another pebble from its shaft, there would not have been much left to be seen and worshipped by later generations of the faithful.

The official pilgrim 'sign', usually produced cheaply in a tin-lead alloy and fitted with a pin or ring for wearing, became popular as the indispensable proof of a successful journey; they were made and sold in millions and thousands have been recovered from the mud of western Europe. The present volume is a catalogue of those found on sites in London along the river Thames, where they were preserved in favourable, anaerobic, permanently moist conditions. After a narrative introduction, explaining the origins, making, trends, and types of badges, including the secular ones such as livery badges and lovers' tokens, and an account of how and where the finds were made, the book lists the items by place of origin. First a large section devoted to Canterbury with photographs of 138 types of badges, from shell- and pear-shaped ampullae of holy water tinged with Becket's blood, small replicas of the ship he came home in or the sword he was killed with, to tiny models of his shrine and the Canterbury bells, which were reputed to have rung out without being touched when St Thomas was murdered.

Other English shrines follow, among them Our Lady of Walsingham, the Holy Rood of Bromholm, St Bridget of Syon Abbey, Isleworth, St Edmund of Bury, St Ethelreda of Ely, and St Osmund of Salisbury. Each entry is not only informative about the surviving badges, but also gives at least some details about the history of the cult of the saint, including references to other studies. Virtually every type of badge mentioned is illustrated.

Foreign shrines and cults are treated in the same way, by country and by person or object of worship: e.g. the famous head of St John the Baptist at Amiens, worshipped by Edward IV and his soldiers when they were feasted in Amiens after the treaty of Picquigny in 1475; the even more famous body and (separate) head of St Denis at Paris, once visited by Edward I; the Virgin Mary at Chartres, who had persuaded Edward III and the Black Prince to make peace at Brétigny; the Veronica at Rome; Our Lady and her nightgown at Aachen; the Three Kings at Cologne, and St Servatius, sometimes said to be a distant cousin of Christ, who survived Him by centuries, at Maastricht.

The secular badges are subdivided into funerary, livery, celebratory, occasional and satirical emblems and lovers' tokens and lucky charms. The livery badges include one boar, collared and chained and found at the Steelyard, and many lions; among the examples for special occasions is a sprig of holly with berries, thought to have been worn by a man at Christmas (women wore ivy).

The book ends with a bibliography, but there is no index to saint, location or subject. As I said in my review of the same author's book on the pilgrims' and other badges found at Salisbury (*The Ricardian*, vol. 9 (1991-93), pp. 90-91) this kind of study sheds light on a small, but intimate and attractive aspect of medieval life.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

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Daniel Williams, 'The hastily drawn up will of William Catesby Esquire, 25 August 1485', *Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*, vol. 51 (1975-6), p. 48.

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